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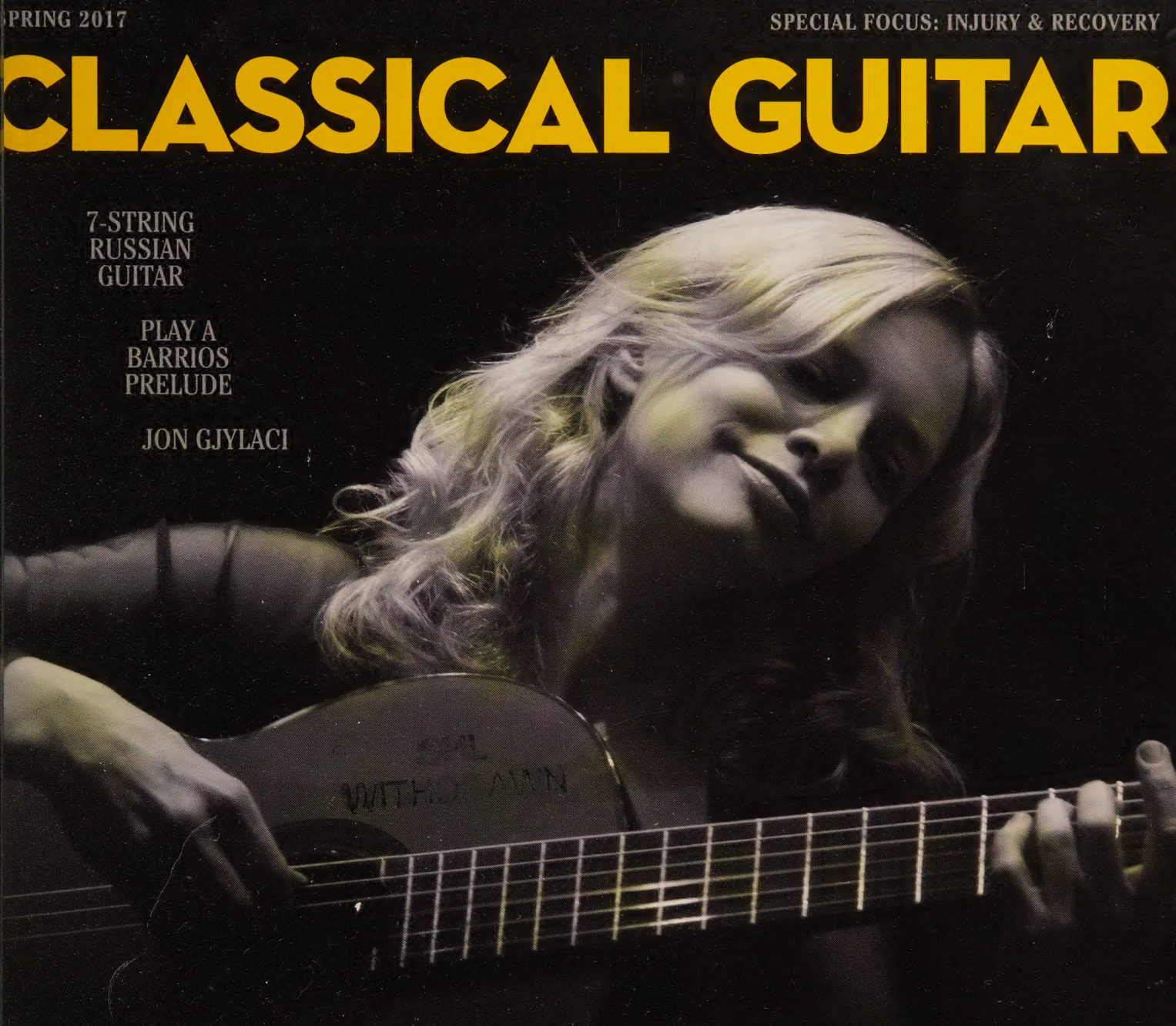

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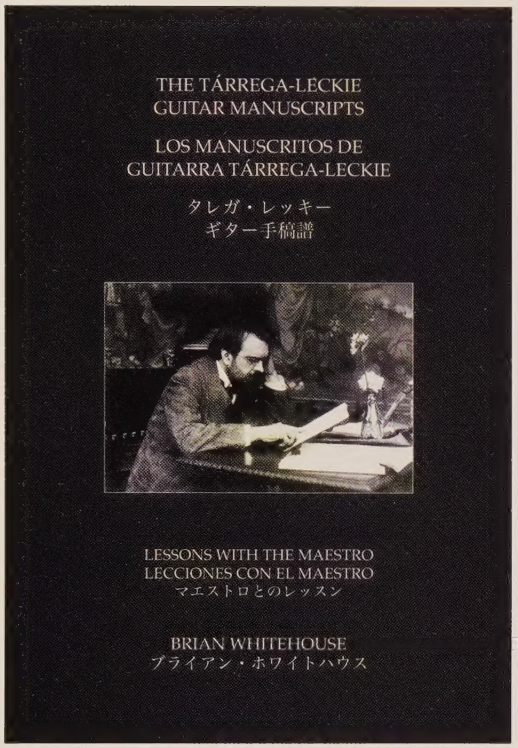

The facsimiles presented here are of manuscripts which were all beautifully handwritten by Francisco Tárrega, the most significant guitarist-composer of the late nineteenth century, for his student and patron, the Englishman, Dr Walter James Leckie. The significance of these scores, published here for the first time, cannot be overstated; with regard to both technical and stylistic matters it was Tárrega who laid the foundations for all future composers and arrangers for the instrument.

In their original format they represent some six hundred and fifty-four pages of the maestro's work and their reproduction, displaying markings by both Tárrega and Dr Leckie, allows a fascinating insight, at source, into the minds of maestro and student. In particular the attention to detail in the fingerings is quite astonishing.

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Dr Leckie with Tárrega

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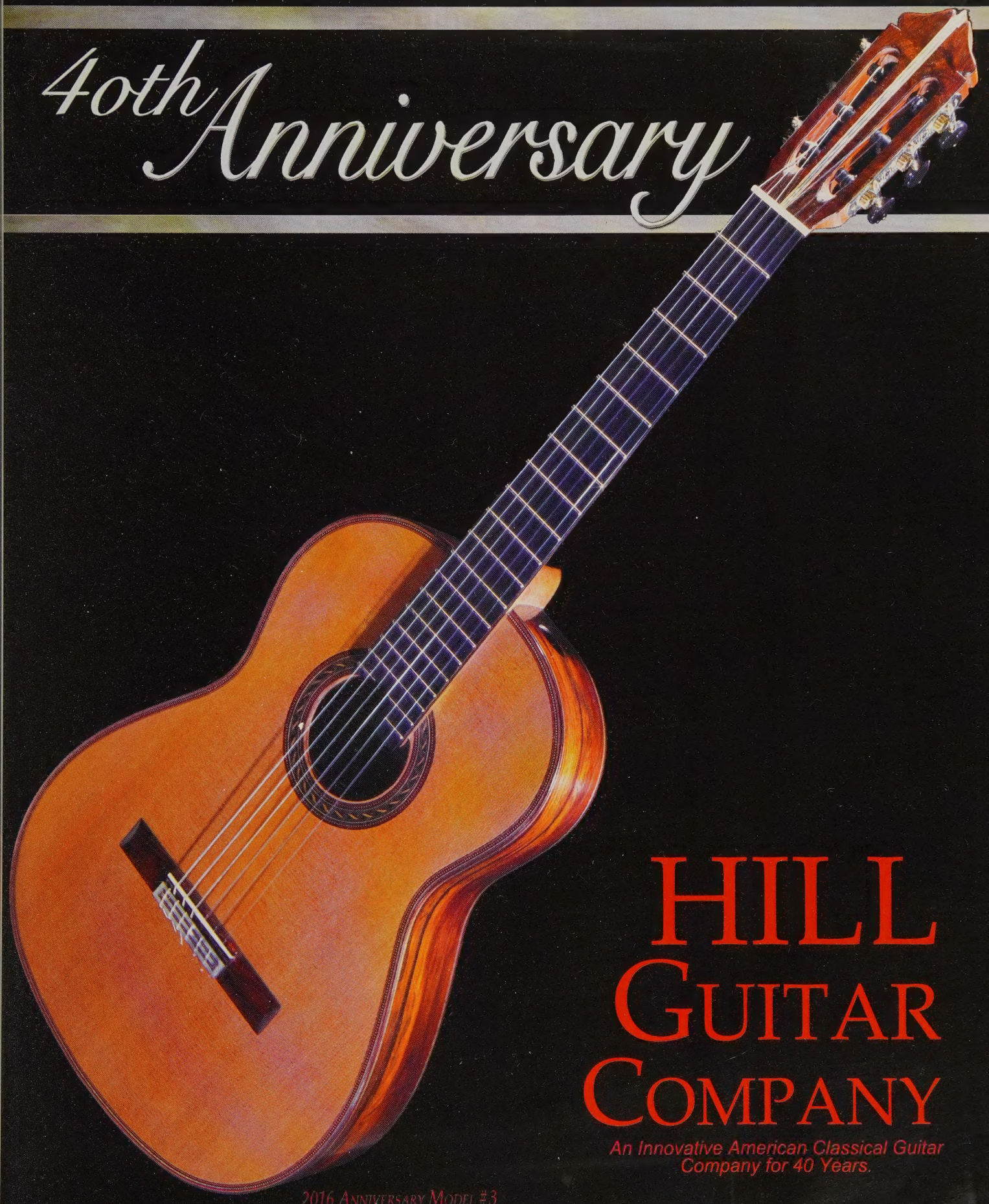

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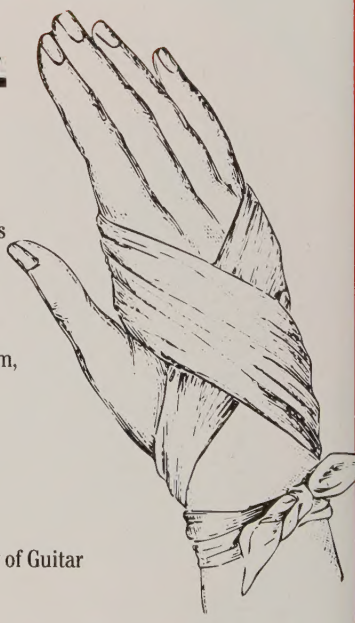

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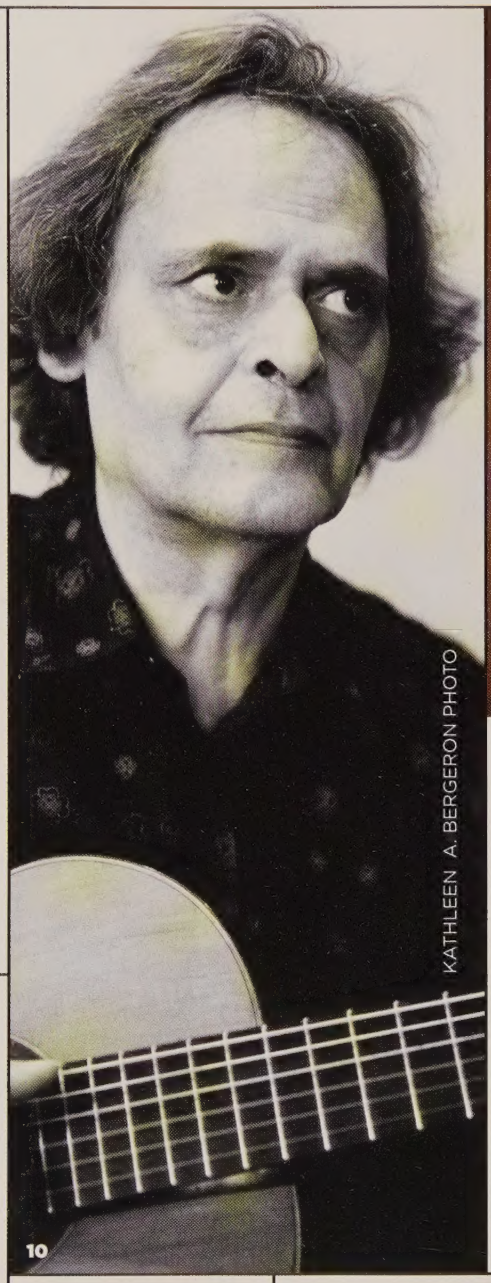

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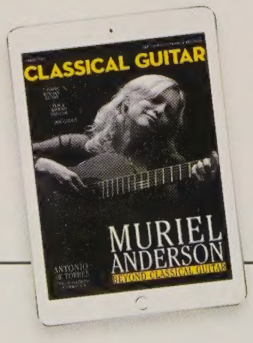

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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LIFE ISN'T FAIR

Van Gogh barely sold any paintings during his lifetime. Bach lived a life full of personal tragedy and died in relative obscurity. Or take the case of Spanish luthier Antonio de Torres, whose 200th birthday we celebrate in this issue, with a big story by Kathleen Bergeron. Though a respected builder among a small coterie of guitarists in his time, he lived out of the limelight far from Europe's major musical centers. Making instruments was never particularly lucrative for him—indeed, at one point he actually stopped crafting guitars and opened a china shop for a few years so he could better support his family. If he were alive today, what would Don Antonio think about the fact that he is now the most revered builder of classical guitars of all time and influenced generations of luthiers who came after him? Or that some of the guitars he painstakingly made in his little workshop are now worth hundreds of thousands of dollars? By rights, he should be sitting on the veranda of an enormous white villa in southern Spain sipping sangria. But it didn't work out that way for him. We don't get to choose if or when history will give us laurels. But at least we can honor him today.

Another one of the stories in this issue is also obliquely about the unfairness of life: Who among us has not had some calamity befall us and wonder, "Why me?" Well, that's a question every person profiled in our Special Focus story on guitar-related injuries and recovery undoubtedly asked him or herself. Why do such "overuse" conditions as focal dystonia (FD) and RSI afflict some guitarists and not others? How much of it is connected to ergonomics and how much to the internal wiring of each individual brain? We don't really have answers to either of those questions, but it's helpful that more guitarists are talking about and dealing with these sorts of issues, or "coming out of the closet" as FD-afflicted Liona Boyd puts it in our feature article on the subject. Other guitarists in the story talk about everything from recovering after accidents to the nightmare of an infected fingernail. When your hands and arms are so central to your life, there is always the potential for something to go wrong that affects these limbs and digits most of us take for granted. We heard from one guitarist, who asked not to be named, who badly cut his left middle finger cutting a peach and had to cancel two weekends of concerts because of it!

As always, if you have any stories about your experiences that you'd like to share, please do. It's helpful for others to know what you've been through. We'll have more about health and guitar ergonomics in future issues as, sadly, this isn't going to go away, and more knowledge is always a good thing.

—Blair Jackson
blair@stringletter.com

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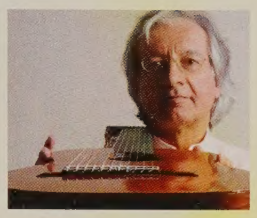

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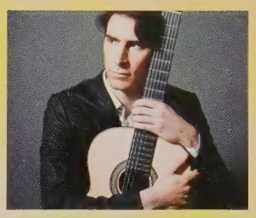
(Gaëlle Solal & Boris Gaquere)



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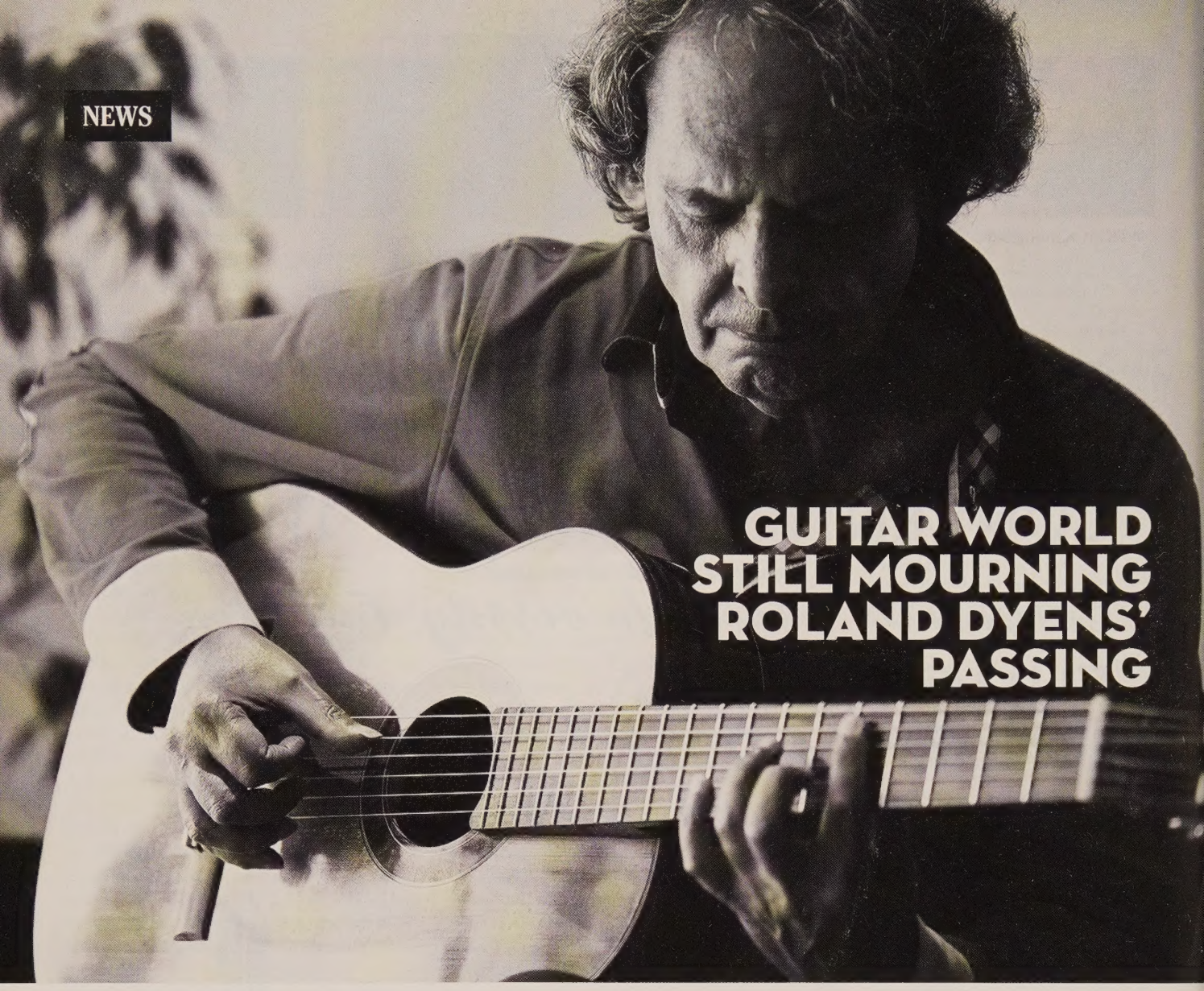


GUITAR WORLD STILL MOURNING ROLAND DYENS' PASSING

Just a few months removed from the unexpected and heartbreaking passing of 61-year-old Roland Dyens on October 29, 2016, it feels as though the classical guitar community is still reeling from the shock. After all, the Tunisia-born French guitarist/composer/teacher was one of the most creative, eclectic, inspiring, and vivacious free spirits in the classical guitar world right up to his death. He was a prolific writer, composer of dozens of pieces in a wide variety of styles and for many different configurations, from solo guitar to multiple guitars, guitar-and-string-quartet and guitar-and-orchestra. Several of his works have become cornerstones of the contemporary guitar repertoire, performed and recorded by many other top guitarists. His arrangement work has also been influential and widely embraced, as he's touched on everything from Sor, Villa-Lobos and Ravel to French pop songs by Piaf and Trenet and jazz standards by Django and Monk. He was also a magnetic performer, famous for his unpredictability, crafting programs that covered a wide spectrum of eras and emotions. He was, quite simply, one of the modern greats.

In the wake of Dyens' passing, I asked some of *Classical Guitar*'s longtime contributors and a few others to share some of their thoughts about him. Here are a few, edited from longer reflections posted online at ClassicalGuitarMagazine.com right after his death.

—Blair Jackson

GRAHAM WADE (historian, *CG* writer): The death of Roland Dyens will be deeply felt throughout the classical guitar world. Maestro Dyens, a virtuoso recitalist, was one of the leading composer/performers in the great tradition that extends back to Sor and Tárrega. His *Tango en skaï* became one of the most popular works in concerts and recordings, though his most poignant work was the three-movement *Libra,* which made direct musical reference to his recovery from a serious heart condition. Altogether, he left an immense legacy of eminent compositions for duos, quartets, quintets, concertos, etc., as well as a host of uniquely original solos.

He loved arranging jazz standards for classical guitar, such as *Nuages, A Night in Tunisia, My Funny Valentine,* and so many others, and his ingenuity in integrating these masterpieces within the compass of the six plucked strings was refreshing, sometimes startling, and invariably satisfying. His music is a hugely significant aspect of the contemporary virtuoso recital repertoire and his vast technical resources and unique imaginative powers will continue to inspire recitalists to meet the challenges he set them.

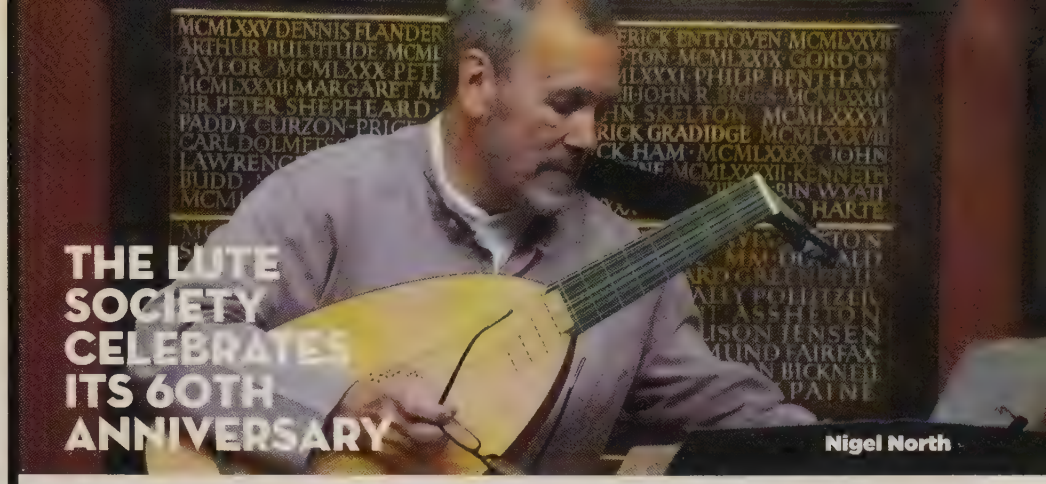
FELIX SALAZAR PHOTO

RUSS DE ANGELO (Dyens' North American manager, producer of La Guitarra California Festival): Roland and I were friends first and business partners second. I lost my dear friend, but I am more saddened that our instrument's most unique musical voice has been silenced, and much too early. Roland was a special ambassador for the guitar, a tremendously creative composer and a very kind human being. A musical genius like a Roland Dyens comes around once in a lifetime, if we're lucky. I was honored to know him. He will be greatly missed, but his music lives on.

PAUL FOWLES (*CG* writer): Few would disagree that Roland was one of the most influential contemporary guitarist/composers. He was certainly one of the most appreciated. As a performer, Roland was a "live" experience, starting his sets with a free improvisation and eschewing the printed program. He was also much more than just a purveyor of his own works—the music of Sor being a recurring feature in his choice of repertoire.

DAVID COLLETT (Guitar Salon International): Absolutely shocking news about Roland. When he was at GSI last year, he spent three nights as my guest in my home [in southern California], so I got to spend some great quality time with him—including having dinners, breakfasts, etc.

He was a genuinely, deeply artistic person who was still very busy composing and arranging. While he was staying with me, he was working on some Piazzolla arrangements. There was one piece in particular—I can't remember exactly which one—that had him stumped, and it was really eating away at him. About 15 minutes into breakfast one morning, he stopped mid-discussion with a blank look on his face, as his eyes glazed over and he went silent. After a few seconds, I had to say, "Roland, Roland—are you OK?" I wasn't not sure what was going on! And he looked at me and said, "The notes! The notes! They're coming!" Then he abandoned a half-eaten breakfast and hurried upstairs and said he had to write the notes down before they left him! I checked with him later and he said the piece finished itself. That's the sign of greatness—grabbing inspiration when it comes!



THE LUTE SOCIETY CELEBRATES ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Nigel North

On Saturday September 10, 2016, The Lute Society celebrated its 60th anniversary with a full day of lectures and concerts at the Art Workers Guild, in Bloomsbury, central London. This was the regular meeting place of the society 60 years ago, however, the inaugural meeting of the venerable organization was held on October 20, 1956 at Trinity College of Music, Mandeville Place, London. There were 20 people present at that first event, including such well-known figures in the lute world as Carl Dolmetsch, Diana Poulton, Ian Harwood, Robert Spencer, Desmond Dupré, and Harry Potts. Of those original founding members, only Harry Potts is still alive.

Potts spoke a little about those early years of the Society, including his trip to Paris in 1957 to attend a five-day "La Luth et sa musique" get-together with some other Society members and Julian Bream, who was never a member, as well. Blanca Bartos Kamp also spoke—he began studying the lute with Diana Poulton at the Royal College of Music in London in 1968.

The opening lecture by lutenist Anthony Bailes, titled "A Little Learning is a Dangerous Thing: Our Ever-Changing View of the Lute and its Music" addressed changes in beliefs regarding "historical accuracy" of modern-day lutenists. The topics Bailes pointed out included contradictions on matters such as whether the lute should be played with fingers or with nails, what the strings of the lute should be made of, and basic aspects of lute construction.

There was an excellent range of mini-recitals given by Lute Society members throughout the day: Singer Sara Stowe, accompanied by Matthew Spring on the theorbo, performed songs by Nicholas Lanier (1588–1666). The Lachrimae Consort—Mike Ashley (lute), Martin Cummins (bandora), Clive Letchford (treble viol and voice), Jonathan Spencer (bass viol), Chris Susans (cittern), David Yates (recorders), and Richard Ollier (reader)—dedicated its concert to Ian Harwood, who was passionate about Elizabethan consort music, performing music by John Dowland, Thomas Morley, and Richard Allison. Duo Piccolo e Grande, with Enzo Puzzovio (mandolino) and Stewart McCoy (theorbo), performed Sonatas by Giuseppe Gaetano Boni (1686–1741), Francesco Webber (*c.* 1740), Evaristo Felice dall'Abaco (1675–1742) and Maurizio Cazzati (1616–1678).

In the afternoon, Nigel North gave a solo recital, playing the exact program from the first ever Lute Society recital, which was given by Desmond Dupré in October 1956 at the end of their inaugural meeting. He played music by John and Robert Dowland, Robert Johnson, Thomas Robinson and Francis Cutting. Nigel North produces a beautiful tone and range of colors on the lute; it was a very special performance.

Anthony Bailes gave the final recital of the day, playing lute music from Salzburg and Vienna. He also produced a beautiful tone on his lute and played pieces by composers such as Matthias Sigismund Biechteler (*c.* 1670–*c.* 1744) and Johann Georg Weichedberger (1760–1740). He ended the concert with three pieces by Johann Anton Losy von Losinthal, who often appears with the surname of Logy in transcriptions for the guitar.

Among the many notable members of the audience were lute-makers Steven Murphy, Michael Lowe, Chris Wilson, and David van Edwards (Lute Society president); esteemed recording engineer John Taylor; cittern and early-instrument expert Peter Forrester; multi-instrumentalist Taro Takeuchi; lutenist and Society secretary Christopher Goodwin; and Thea Abbott, author of the well-researched biography *Diana Poulton: The Lady with the Lute*.

The Lute Society (lutesociety.org) has regular meetings and publishes a wonderful journal—*Lute News*—full of in-depth articles on music, the lute, and lutenists, which would be of great interest to guitarists who wish to play this rich repertoire.

—Thérèse Wassily Saba

THÉRÈSE WASSILY SABA PHOTO

LAGQ PREMIERES PAT METHENY'S 'ROAD TO THE SUN'

On October 20, 2016, at the University of Denver's Newman Center, the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet gave the world premiere of *Road to the Sun*, a new work they commissioned from jazz guitarist and composer Pat Metheny. The piece runs about 30 minutes and is quintessential Metheny from start to finish, yet perfectly adapted to classical guitar quartet rather than a jazz quartet. *Road to the Sun* is in six movements that are not given individual titles, with some movements segueing seamlessly into the next. The title refers a trip Metheny made to Glacier National Park's scenic Going-to-the-Sun Road the day after hearing the LAGQ perform live a few years ago.

Those familiar with the multi-Grammy-winning guitarist's work will hear echoes of music he has penned during his 41-year recording career in the sometimes wistful harmonies, catchy melodies, dramatic dynamic shifts, fleet-fingered lines, and energetic strumming.

Metheny told students from the University of Denver during a Q&A session the afternoon before the premiere that he never had formal guitar lessons, and that while composing he generally doesn't dwell much on the mechanics of guitar playing. He often writes at the piano, but took a decidedly guitar-centric approach for this piece.

Metheny conferred with members of the quartet during writing phase and ultimately tailored the parts to highlight the strengths and timbral characteristics of each LAGQ member. In a pre-concert talk, the composer revealed that he kept a chart in front of him as he worked, featuring each player's picture and details that co-founder John Dearman provided to him about their individual styles.

Classical guitarists may be surprised at the number of idiomatic devices from the classical guitar domain that Metheny deployed in the piece. He included passages of melodic tremolo like that found in *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*, as well as arpeggiated chords and linear arpeggios traversing the guitar neck á la Villa Lobos *Etude 2*. Metheny featured various types of strumming, including rapid flutter-strums on the high strings with the index finger reminiscent of those found in *Sakura Variations* by Yuquijiro Yocoh, but he cautioned the players to avoid flamenco-style strumming. The work also spotlighted ensemble interplay with the trading of improvised-sounding lines that hinted at blues and jazz.

A major feature of Metheny's work is his gift for musical narrative and storytelling. This piece certainly takes the listener on a journey that visits many sonic vistas and valleys. Following the energetic fifth movement, *Road to the Sun* closes introspectively with an epilogue recapping a melancholic theme from the first movement before drifting into silence.

Throughout the piece, the members of LAGQ played with characteristic grace and virtuosity, which masked the difficulty of the music. Dearman stated that the length and dramatic scope of the piece placed it among the most challenging works LAGQ has yet tackled. Bill Kanengiser called Metheny's latest opus, "a major addition to the guitar quartet repertoire." The group gave three performances of the work in the fall of 2016 and plans to record it in the fall of 2017. *Road to the Sun* will be a central part of LAGQ's program during their 2017–2018 season.

—Mark Small

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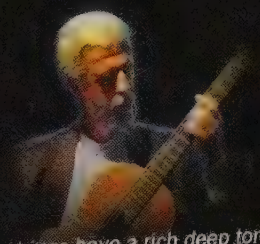

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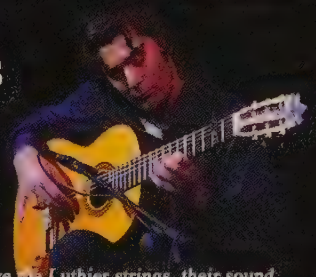

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CULTURE CHAMELEON

The road from Albania to Greece to England has led Jon Gjylaci to some interesting new musical spaces

by Ollie McGhie

It's five a.m. and there's not a guitar in sight. First up, a gruelling running regime. Then, intense firearms-training followed by a drill. Jon Gjylaci has a shaved head and fingernails cut to the quick. The heat in Corfu, in his adopted home country of Greece, is blistering. Make one mistake and his service period could be extended by a day, a week. Don't excel, don't dawdle. Get in, get out.

Actually, that scene was from back in 2013. Today, Gjylaci (pronounced "je-latch-e") a 33-year-old Greek-Albanian classical guitarist, sits in front of me in London sipping his café Americano, relaxing the day after performing and being interviewed on the BBC Radio 3 show *In Tune*, hosted by Sean Rafferty. It's hard to imagine him wielding anything other than the white guitar case tucked to his side.

In 2013 Gjylaci's musical studies, concerts, teaching and entire life were all put on hold. There had been delays, postponements, and intermittent communication with the Greek Consulate in Leeds (in north England) but finally Gjylaci's conscription came through. Fortunately, owing to his dual nationality and Greek-living-abroad status, the compulsory nine months of service was reduced by two-thirds. So, in the middle of his studies in Manchester at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) with Craig Ogden, and teaching at nearby Bolton School, he up and left his life—his small flat in Greater Manchester—to return to Greece for his statutory military service.

"It's something we all have to do," he says. "Most people try and do it as early in life as possible. Luckily my time only lasted the allotted three months."

Last night's performance included a tribute to Roland Dyens, a musical figure who has been hugely influential in Gjylaci's life. "I grew up with his music, feeling the connections he made between the worlds of classical and jazz. Though sadly I never met him on the guitar circuit.

"The scores for the Dyens' arrangements are so detailed that you think the man must have been incredibly strict," he continues, "but if you watch his master classes online you can see how free-spirited he is. I couldn't improvise like him. When I'm with my brother [violinist Esen-Nikolas Gjylaci] we improvise together—but it is something that is much more in the Albanian musical tradition. In Miroslav Tadic's *Walk Dance* on the album, my brother does a short solo which is very much inspired by this tradition."

Gjylaci is currently promoting his latest album, *Edges of Thought*, which is his personal homage to music from around the globe. "The guitar has traditions everywhere," he notes. "In Greece, we have the bouzouki. In Albania we have the cifteli [a two-stringed instrument, fretted diatonically]. I wanted to draw on as many cultures as possible."

The album was released in mid-2016, with its unofficial launch taking place during the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Manchester Guitar Circle, one of the UK's oldest guitar societies. The tracks on the album certainly cover a significant part of the globe, featuring everything from Albéniz's *Asturias* to Tadic's *Laments, Dances and Lullabies, Volume 1* and Gary Ryan's *Benga Beat*.

"With the well-known pieces, such as *Asturias*, which have been recorded so many times, I wanted to do something to complement the guitar," Gjylaci explains. "So I spoke with my brother, who is the director of the Northern String Quartet, asking him if he could do something to complement Segovia's arrangement with a string accompaniment." The results are indeed a refreshing arrangement, the quartet swooping in at the right moments heightening the more sensuous passages.

"I did the same with Leo Brouwer's *Un dia de Noviembre*. I always thought the texture of it was very thin and needed something to enhance it... Hopefully it has worked."

Next to Gjylaci sits his distinct Japanese white Karura case, which houses his 2007 Greg Smallman guitar, the same instrument brandished by the likes of John Williams, Craig Ogden, and Xuefei Yang. He tells me it has rosewood back and sides and a cedar top. It's an expensive and respected instrument. "It has it's own seat on every flight I take. It's not worth the agony of breakages," he says.

Gjylaci's views of the Smallman are unpretentious and realistic. "Like John Williams says, the projection is a side effect of the fan-bracing design. It's a beautiful instrument—the tone is sweet and the harmonics are crisp. Its sustain is so long, a single plucked note can last nearly a minute. Sometimes in the studio you do a recording only to find the bass is still ringing when it shouldn't, so I look at my technique, the way I'm playing and work hard to correct it. In a studio you're completely exposed to every nuance; you can't hide away. You have to spend a lot of time listening to yourself."

The reason for two violas on Gary Ryan's *Benga Beat* (rather than voice, which is written into the score) is that, as Gjylaci says, "I'm really bad at singing! Under the fingers this piece feels so comfortable and I love playing it, so it had to be on the album. Instead of singing we have double violas, which start in unison and then one moves an octave higher to create a sort of chorus effect. It was an escape for me not to sing it, but it also works well with the album as a whole."

Gjylaci was born in 1983 and brought up in the Balkan country of Albania, which at the time was home to about three million people. "About a million of these people emigrated to Greece, Italy, England," he says, "and I am one of them." In 1991, when the borders of Albania started to open up following the fall of communism throughout eastern Europe (sparked in part by the Berlin Wall coming down), Gjylaci and his family moved from Albania to Greece. "This was where I took my first music lessons—first the piano, then the flute." But the guitar came most naturally to him and he never looked back.

Alongside his performing career he's a teacher at Bolton independent private school and at Junior RNCM. "Junior RNCM has a fantastic, vibrant department. There's some real talent there—10-year-olds are hammering out Grade 7 pieces. How do they do that? It motivates us to constantly improve and expand our own techniques. Our generation [those in their 30s] never really had all these techniques available to us at that age.

"I love teaching and performing," he continues. "In the beginning, I did the teaching to survive, but now I find it so rewarding. Performing is rewarding too, especially when we spend so many hours honing our craft. If you were just travelling and playing all the time, I feel you could lose the passion. Some guitarists do 200 concerts or more in a year. You go into burn-out. Can you really put your heart out there every second day? For me, the balance of teaching and performing works best."

Jon and his Brother, Eson-Nikolas

With Gjylaci working in Manchester I couldn't resist asking him if he has been influenced at all by the "Madchester" rock bands—the Happy Mondays and Charlatans of the 1980s.

"The popular music scene in Manchester is very strong," he says. "There's a lot of stuff happening. As a student I went to many popular concerts—from jazz to band nights and rock concerts, seeing many acts, including [American electric guitar wizards] Steve Vai and Joe Satriani. We guitarists tend to be less snobbish about other music genres, compared to some fellow classical instrumentalists. We like to listen to a lot of musical styles. Living in Manchester, you can't help but pick up these cultural influences. I try to put the same energy into my playing."

Gjylaci is very keen to promote more British music from living composers. In his repertoire he already has Helen Walker, an accomplished jazz and popular music musician who has written five miniatures in a variety of styles for him (See "Music to Play," p.57). Along with new repertoire, Gjylaci is hell-bent on pushing the instrument up onto the main stage with the piano: "It can be just as heavy, some people just don't notice," he says, finishing his Americano. **CG**

The principal function when playing for *bailaores* is to provide the music for their performance. You are accompanying them; they are not accompanying you.

PLAYING FOR A DANCER

The best flamenco is truly a collaboration

by Jason Webster

There is a saying in flamenco that before launching off on a solo career, a guitarist should first play for at least ten years accompanying *bailaores* and then another ten years with *cantaores*; only after this combined experience will he or she have the necessary training and understanding to perform alone. Although this is not always strictly adhered to, there is some truth to it. Players who fail to go through the due apprenticeship can usually be spotted within the space of a handful of bars. What gives them away, in most cases, is failure to adhere to a strict sense of *compás*.

Compás, as regular readers of this column will know, means "rhythm" and "meter." It is of crucial importance to flamenco—even more so than in many other Western forms of music. To be told that you have poor compás is like a boxer being told he has a glass jaw or a gardener being told she doesn't have a green thumb (or "fingers" as they say in the UK). It can be practically terminal, so you need to nail it. And the best way to do so is to play for dancers. A lot.

Fortune has blessed me with a beautiful Spanish wife, who is also a highly talented flamenco dancer. I have played for her in the past, but less so in recent years: the health of our marriage was deemed of greater importance. Be warned—arguments over rhythm can become heated (and learn to accept now that it's always the guitarist's fault). But, when I was preparing this article and asked her opinion about guitar accompaniment for a dancer, the first thing she said was, "Compás!" She did not need to elaborate; that single word encompasses so much. In fact, doctoral theses could be (and perhaps have been) written on the subject. There is something magical about hitting a truly perfect compás with another performer, as though the rhythm somehow expands into multidimensions and you are able somehow to step inside it. I think this is the reason why flamencos can be so playful with it, throwing in off-beats and polyrhythms that seem to defy understanding. Having good compás and being in time with the dancer is the fundamental building block for accompanying; it is the foundation upon which the entire performance is built. Without it, it simply isn't flamenco.

The second thing my wife mentioned was tempo. There is a tendency among guitarists who have spent little or no time with dancers to play too fast. All those hours practicing and perfecting can turn

JOHN SINGER SARGENT, *EL JALEO* 1882

the humblest musician into an insufferable show-off. And what better way to demonstrate your virtuosity than by hammering the fretboard at 90 mph? This may impress your more sedentary friends, but it's only going to make for a grumpy bailaora. (Trust me on this one.) So almost as important as compás is to slow things down a bit. Make sure you're playing at a pace that the dancer can actually follow with her feet. In fact, it's probably the other way around—let the dancer set the pace and you follow. Remember that the principal function when playing for bailaores is to provide the music for their performance. You are accompanying them; they are not accompanying you. It is, of course, a collaboration, but there is a pecking order and—notable exceptions apart—guitarists are not at the top of the bill. You are there to provide the music that makes the dancer want to dance.

Which brings us to the third element my wife mentioned: *soniquete*. This is a very difficult word to translate. My dictionary simply gives it as "droning." Ignore that. In a flamenco context, soniquete means something like "the groove," "the vibe," that thing that makes you want to sway your hips and start dancing. You know it when you hear it, and when you've got it, it shows. You may have great compás, you may have slowed your playing down to a reasonable, danceable pace, but if the soniquete isn't there, you might as well go home. Few things can be more soul-destroying than glancing up from your guitar at the blank expression on a bailaora's face and the look in her eye that says, "What do you expect me to do with *that*?" The music has to have "feeling" (and the Spanish sometimes use the English word here). It may seem too obvious even to mention, but it can easily be overlooked. With your backside firmly settled in a chair, it's easy for a guitarist to forget that—for the time being at least—the music has to invoke and speak of movement.

So take your time, enjoy it, and make something you would want to dance to yourself. Soniquete probably can't be taught, but it can be absorbed. Surround yourself with flamenco. Play, play, play. Go and find yourself a dancer (marrying them is optional). And then start all over again.

CG

LETTER FROM LEBANON

A BRIEF RESPITE FROM HELL

Syrian refugees escape war with the help of classical guitar

by Susan McDonald

Shots rang out, and the children sitting in a semi-circle on the ground in front of me stiffened, watching for my reaction. My hands froze for just an instant as I glanced quickly around the room for any escape, any hiding place. There was none. If my worst nightmare had come true and ISIS had broken through the border, all was lost. There was nothing I or anyone else could do. I continued playing, smiling at the children who were sitting on the floor in front of me. They relaxed. They had been through worse.

This was all new to me. I was used to performing in many types of circumstances, from deep in the Amazon to Iraq, but this felt a bit extreme even by my standards. I had come to Lebanon under the auspices of American Voices, an international organization whose unofficial motto is "Art in Difficult Places." Not that Lebanon itself was difficult—far from it. We had found the country to be extremely gracious and welcoming, and it had served us well not only in our mission of cultural diplomacy but also in acting as a safe hub for our students coming from Iraq and Syria to attend our teaching program. As director of the guitar program for YES Academy (Youth Excellence Onstage) at the University of Notre Dame Louaize (Lebanon) and director of international programs for Fine Arts Foundation, my mission was twofold: I had come early to give concerts in Syrian refugee camps throughout Lebanon, delivering musical instruments and art supplies, and hoping to offer a brief respite from the hell the children had experienced. The next phase would be to work with advanced students from Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and neighboring Syria.

Our students were all very skilled players, coming from the most sophisticated conservatories in the region. This was the second year for the guitar program and I was filled with anticipation. The year before, when I had started the program, I'd had the opportunity to work with eight advanced students. Three of them had come late, having struggled to make it across the border from Syria for two weeks of relief from the unending barrage of mor-

 PHOTO: RUSSELL WATKINS/DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

tar fire and military checkpoints. This year, those three students, plus the fourth member of their quartet, were to be my teaching assistants and would be in charge of the program for younger kids.

Word of the program had spread and this year I was set up to have 19 students, with 14 coming from Syria. I was anxious to see whether they would make it across the border. Since we were in a relatively remote area without cell phone reception, I wouldn't know until we had made it back to Beirut.

I was deep in the Beqaa Valley of Lebanon, well within the "red zone" on all of the embassy maps—the area where even necessity did not warrant travel for American citizens, and where the embassy had no responsibility and no real ability to protect me.

We had gotten lost on the way here. Waving towards a mountain range several miles away, I asked my driver what was over the mountains.

"Syria," he replied.

I noticed as we drove past miles and miles of refugee encampments that many of the people were very well-dressed. I had even seen several luxury cars parked next to the UNHCR tents and realized that these people who had fled in the middle of the night to Lebanon had been well-to-do before everything had fallen apart. They were doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors. The fact that the family car was a Mercedes didn't prevent ISIS from coming to slaughter everyone in the middle of the night. These were the people who hadn't left the country in time, who had thought their positions in society would protect them. Now they were huddled under tarps with no electricity, no water, and no hope.

We finally made it to the last refugee center of the day and a group of little girls in hijabs came running out to greet me. "We love you, Miss!" they giggled, hugging me. One little girl followed me around everywhere I went, sitting next to me and occasionally stroking my hair. I asked a volunteer what her story was.

"Her mother was killed. In front of her."

I hugged the little girl, then gave her a peacock feather and let her strum a few chords on my guitar. She nestled up next to me. I kissed the top of her head.

On our return to Beirut, a car swerved into our lane, sideswiping us and sending us off the road. As I waited for our driver to return from checking on the other driver, I finally received the call I had been waiting for. The Syrians had made it across the border! They had gone through a tremendous amount of effort to get here. They had risen before dawn to take taxis from Damascus to Beirut. Although American Voices and the Fine Arts Foundation was paying for it all, they still had to borrow money from family and friends to show at the border so they would be allowed into Lebanon. They had letters from us, from the university and even from the American Embassy, but none of it was enough; they were still held for hours at the border in preparation for being sent back to Syria. Finally, the UN had gotten involved and they were on their way.

My students were waiting when we finally arrived back at the university. They were all lined up to greet me, waiting with smiles and hugs. I had seen their videos and felt that I knew them already. They all played on an extremely high level: Dyens, Rodrigo, Villa-Lobos... They studied at the

An 'informal tented settlement' in Lebanon's Bekaa valley. The mountains in the background form the border with Syria, just a few miles away.

McDonald, with guitar, and refugee children

THEY HAD STRUGGLED WITH THE LACK OF ELECTRICITY, MORTAR FIRE, AND THE CONSTANT FEAR OF BEING STOPPED AT CHECKPOINTS TO BE CONSCRIPTED INTO ASSAD'S ARMY, WHERE THEY WOULD SERVE AS FODDER ON THE FRONT LINES AGAINST THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS.

Higher Institute of Music in Damascus, which was a musical oasis in the midst of war. It was, essentially, the Julliard of the Middle East, turning out concert-level musicians. Syria had a great tradition of classical music. For all that could be said about the Assad regime, there was still strong support for the arts. Many of the buildings were still intact and concerts continued throughout the war. Even in the midst of mortars, which all of my students had experienced—several had the scars to prove it—performances continued.

I asked them a little bit about their lives in Syria, careful to skirt around any topic that might be dangerous for them.

They struggled with the lack of electricity and the accompanying bedlam of the generators, mortar fire, and the constant fear of being stopped at checkpoints to be conscripted into Assad's army, where they would serve as fodder on the front lines against their fellow citizens. Or worse, if a checkpoint was controlled by ISIS, they risked having their phones searched. If any of the photos showed that they were musicians, they risked amputation, since music was forbidden under that particularly twisted brand of fanaticism.

There were specific physical problems I had never encountered in all of my years of teaching. Six years of war had created hunched, protective postures in many players. They all had neck problems. It was almost as if they were trying to protect themselves by drawing their necks into their bodies. That in turn caused nerve issues and problems that affected their arms and hands. I couldn't imagine how I would be able to fix them in two short weeks. I knew that my work with them would continue long after we had all returned home. I was grateful for the internet.

First I had them breathe. "Every time you exhale," I told them, "imagine that all of the tension, all of the fear, all of the worry is being released. Drive it out with every breath." They visibly relaxed.

"When you inhale, imagine light and strength filling your body, straightening your spine." They closed their eyes and did as I said. Their shoulders relaxed. I felt as if I were part of some holy ritual. I was not the teacher here. I was just part of what was happening.

I went around the room and, one by one, took their hands. They were brittle and tense. "Let go," I said. There was a marginal shift. "Completely," I said, holding their hands. Their hands felt like frightened animals, practically trembling with stress. "You are safe here. Let me hold your hands. You don't need to do anything. Just relax." One by one, they let go. It was the same each time. Once they wrapped their heads around the feeling of safety, they surrendered. Completely.

At the end of the class, I asked each student to play something short and to tell me why they played music. As I listened to their answers, I tried to hold myself together.

"Our lives are terrible... without music." "It's like Heaven's stairs."

"When the bombs are going off, sometimes we think, 'If I get killed... it will not be so bad.' And then I pick up my guitar and it is OK that I live."

"Because for us music is a matter of life and death."

The truth was this was so much more than teaching. I was committed to these students. They had become my musical godchildren.

I gave them everything I had musically, physically, spiritually—even financially. And yet what they gave me was so much more. They renewed my faith, my confidence in my path, and even my music. Through them, I once again accessed all that I most loved about music: the passion, the surrender to beauty, the sense of communion with those around me. Most of all, I saw with fresh eyes the tremendous, sacred, weighty gift I had been given with my drive to pursue the life of a musician.

I knew that I needed to fortify them in the face of the storm to which they must return. Realizing how profoundly affected they were by every word I said to them, I gave them images to work with, ideas that went well beyond music but which were perfectly expressed through music: "I firmly believe that every positive note, every sound, every act of beauty, serves

to counteract something negative somewhere else. So every time you play a note, send it out into the world. Feel the weight of your arms and push the strings into the guitar. Let the sound resonate. Let it work its mission on the world. Overcome darkness with each note."

I let each of them play my guitar. They would sit down, play a few notes, and then close their eyes, listening to each note as it rang out sweetly and strongly, and smile in pure bliss. I knew that when they played their own guitars they would remember the sound they gotten from my Guillermo Poras Salazar guitar and try to emulate it. That alone would drive the fear and despair aside for a while. In addition to technique classes and private lessons, we created a small guitar orchestra. Their playing was precise, determined, and emotional. Although the students came from several different religions, they worked together like brothers and sisters, each looking out for the other and offering encouragement.

I made videotapes for them. I knew that somehow they would come in handy, that perhaps they might help them find opportunities in places not besieged by war. The first year when I had done it, they had faltered before the camera, overtaken by nerves and the high stakes of hope.

What could I possibly tell them? To pull themselves together? To be more determined? They knew how to do those things in the face of trauma, but not, perhaps, in the face of hope.

It suddenly came to me in a flash of inspiration. I had recently spent some time deep in the Ecuadorian Amazon working on a new Animal Ballet (for which I film wildlife, often in remote locales, and then compose music to go along with their movements and personalities). Remembering the astonishing biodiversity, the many unseen levels of life, the rich sense of hidden mysteries, I knew exactly what to say to them.

"Within each of us flows a river. A river of beauty, a river of strength, a river that cannot be compromised by anything external. In this river is every beautiful sight, every exquisite sound, every note ever written. You can always find those things if you look into the river." I smiled at them. They were rapt.

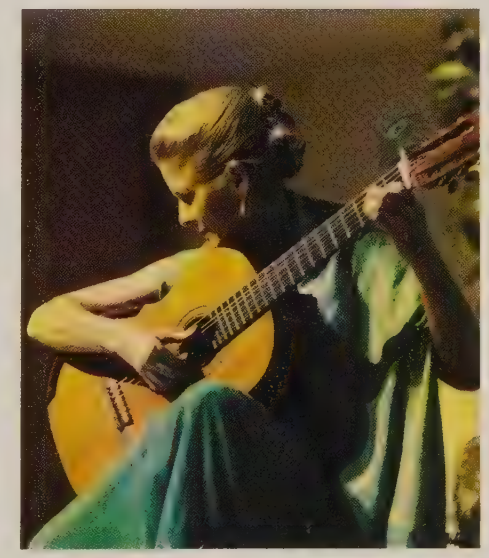
"Of course there will be times when you get thrown out of the river," I continued. "You might start to panic, to climb toward the brambles. That is natural. But don't. You must get back into the river as quickly as you can. Within the river is beauty. Within the river is safety. Always remember the river."

I knew that this imagery would be called for many times after they returned to their war-stricken nation. It was about so much more than music.

After they returned, each time I would learn on the news about new attacks and atrocities taking place in their vicinity in Syria, I would worry. I would try to reach them, but often communication was impossible. Desperate to help, to offer something encouraging, to act in some way, no matter how small, I typed a message to them on Facebook. It said simply, "Remember the River."

One by one, as access was restored, they responded.

"The river still flows for us." "The river is life." "We will always remember the river."



Susan McDonald is a concert guitarist and Director of International Programs for Remember the River (the international branch of Fine Arts Foundation, a 501c3 organization), whose mission is to support artists in regions of conflict or isolation through performances, deliveries of musical instruments and art supplies, teacher training and mentorship. rememberthe river.org; animalballets.com

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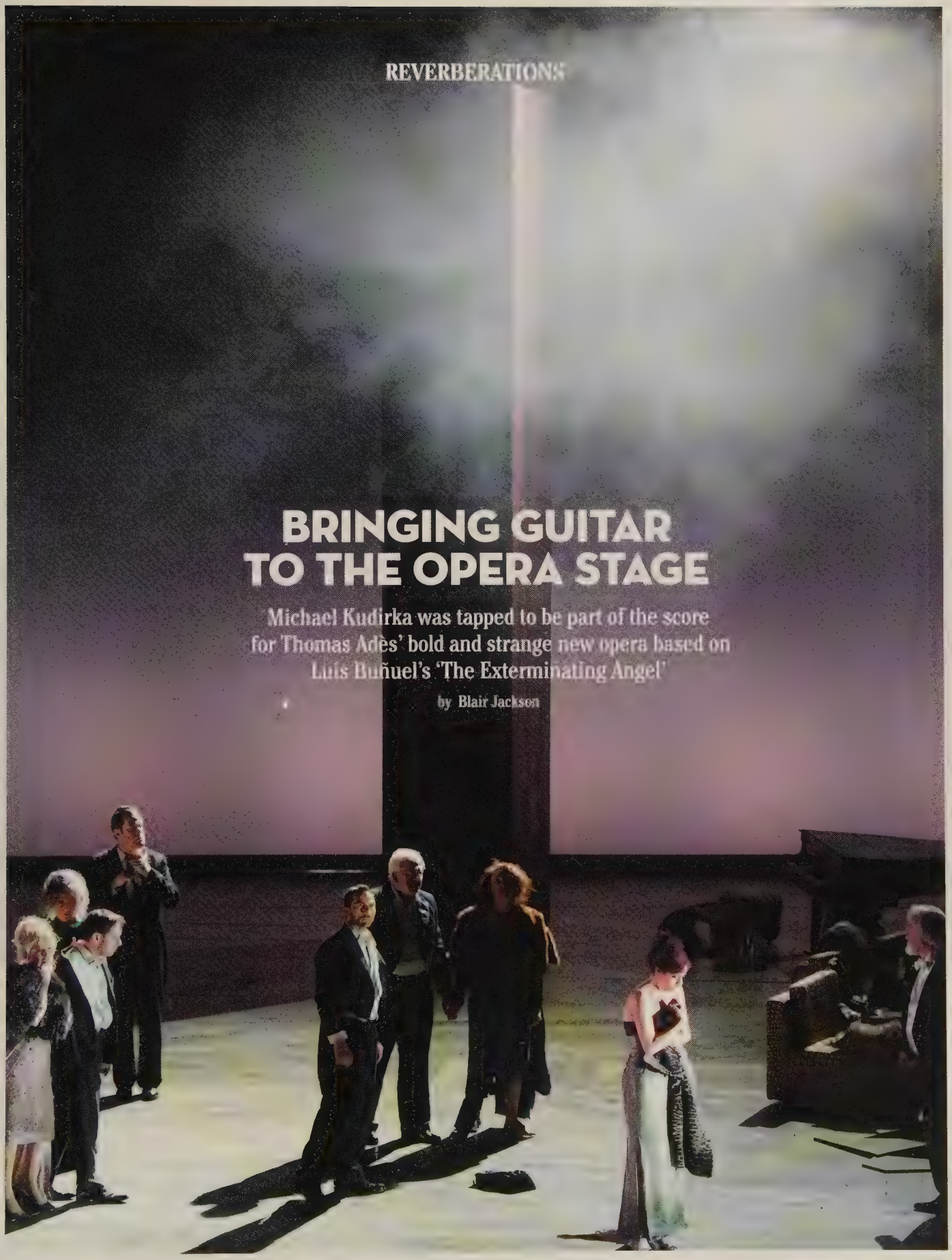

BRINGING GUITAR TO THE OPERA STAGE

Michael Kudirka was tapped to be part of the score for Thomas Adès' bold and strange new opera based on Luis Buñuel's 'The Exterminating Angel'

by Blair Jackson

PHOTO © SALZBURGER FESTSPIELE / MONIKA RITTERSHAUS

You never know what kind of stories will be turned into operas. Aside from the fantastical plots of many classic operas (Bible stories, Greek and Norse mythology, fairy tales!), the modern era has given us such unlikely story sources as the life of Gandhi (*Satyagraha*), the murder of a gay city supervisor in San Francisco (*Harvey Milk*), A-bomb pioneer Robert Oppenheimer (*Dr. Atomic*), and Russia's infamous "Mad Monk" (*Rasputin*), to name just a few. Still, few would have predicted that one of the opera sensations of 2016 would be an adaptation of Spanish surrealist director Luis Buñuel's darkly satirical 1962 film *The Exterminating Angel* (*El ángel exterminador*). It's about a lavish dinner party in a mansion that turns unsettlingly, then horrifically, strange when the well-heeled guests find they are psychologically unable to leave the house. Over the course of a few days, many bleak shadings of the human soul are revealed, including guilt, greed, paranoia, murderous inclinations, and more. Not exactly *opera bouffe* material (though it does have sharply humorous moments).

The opera of *The Exterminating Angel*, which premiered to rave reviews in the summer of 2016 at the Salzburg Music Festival in Austria, is a three-act work, with music by acclaimed British composer, conductor, and pianist Thomas Adès, and text by Tom Cairns in collaboration with Adès, based on the original film script by Buñuel and Luis Alcoriza. Adès has written two previous operas, as well as numerous orchestral works, chamber pieces, choral compositions, and more. Though often working in decidedly modern idioms, Adès also draws inspiration from past masters; he is a true eclectic. This approach is evident in his score for *The Exterminating Angel*, which traverses a wide range of old and modern styles—and even includes a five-minute sequence dominated by classical guitar!

To consult on and polish that guitar part, which plays under a bizarre third-act scene in which a (projected) disembodied hand creeps across the stage to strangle one of the party guests, Adès enlisted the help of Michael Kudirka, who for many years has been a leading proponent of new directions in classical-guitar music. Not only did Kudirka help shape the part, he played it for the Salzburg performances of the opera, and will reprise that role this spring when *The Exterminating Angel* has its London debut at Covent Garden (April 24–May 8), and then moves to the U.S. for a number of performances at the Metropolitan Opera in New York (October 26–November 24).

On the phone from Wisconsin, where he currently lives with his wife, flautist Tara Schwab (an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point; they play together as Duo Amantis), Kudirka filled us in on his involvement with the project, which dates back several years, when he was still based in Los Angeles. "Adès usually spends about half the year in London and the other half in Los Angeles, and we were introduced in L.A. by our mutual friend, composer Veronika Krausas. After hearing me perform Hans Werner Henze's *Royal Winter Music* as a part of Krausas' chamber opera *Mad Lady Macbeth*, he would occasionally show up at my performances: He heard a couple of solo programs, and he also saw me play some early music on theorbo and viola da gamba.

Thomas Adès

BRIAN VOCE PHOTO

'I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU—THOSE FIVE MINUTES OF GUITAR MUSIC ARE RIDICULOUSLY DIFFICULT, BUT THAT'S THE WAY ADÈS WRITES FOR EVERYBODY! I MADE A GREAT EFFORT NOT TO TELL HIM ALL THE THINGS THAT WERE INCONVENIENT; JUST THE THINGS THAT WERE IMPOSSIBLE.'

—MICHAEL KUDIRKA

"After he'd heard me in all these different situations, we ran into each other at a dinner party and I popped the question to him: 'Have you ever considered writing any guitar music?' That's a question I feel compelled to ask any time I meet a composer of that stature," Kudirka adds with a laugh. "He answered that he'd love to, but he's a pianist and he said he was a bit intimidated by how idiosyncratic the guitar is, but that he'd think about it.

"A couple of years passed, we stayed in touch, and he saw me a couple of more times in L.A., even after I'd moved to Wisconsin. Then, last February, I was doing a series of performance residencies [in southern California] at Chapman University, USC, and CalArts, and he said, 'Hey, as long as you're in town, how about if you come by my house in L.A. I've got this little guitar aria in the middle of my new opera. Help me work on it.' So I went over there and we went through it one note and one chord at a time. His notation was very pianistic, especially in his approach to articulation, so we found certain timbres and techniques such as *tambora* and different kinds of *rasgueado* strumming to help give a wider palette to some of the accented notes. I wanted to change as little of what he wrote as possible, but there were a few harmonies where there were dense tone clusters you can do really easily on the piano—these really tight intervals—I'd say, 'I can get that one or that one [on guitar], but I can't get all of them.' So it was a matter of little bits of omission. I'll be honest with you—these five minutes of guitar music are ridiculously difficult, but that's the way he writes for everybody! I made a great effort *not* to tell him all the things that were inconvenient; just the things that were impossible.

"So after we got through everything he said, 'This is great—I'd love to have you play it as well. Let me talk to people at the Salzburg Festspiele,' where it was going to be premiered. About a month later, I got an email from them saying they'd like me to come over and do it. We did a few days of rehearsal in Vienna and then moved over to Salzburg."

The musical passage in question scores what could be a dream or hallucination; it begins with nearly a minute of solo guitar, then accompanies a mezzo soprano (played at the premiere by the incomparable Anne Sofie von Otter) for an aria. "At the end of the aria," Kudirka says, "the Ondes Martinot—that great early electronic instrument [invented in the late 1920s]—comes in with this deep, spooky bassline from the keyboard, and these really creepy Theremin-like gliding lines. That instrument sort of represents the malevolent nature of the room that they're stuck in. At the very end, the guitar does a huge slow glissando with a *rasgueado* tremolo going on all the way from the first fret up to the bridge, as the hand is actually crawling up the character's body to strangle her. Tubular bells chime three times, and at the moment my left-hand fingers are just half an inch from the bridge, with my right-hand fingers doing a tremolo on the shortest imaginable string—at the peak of this glissando—Adès cues the entire orchestra to come in with an absolutely devastating cacophony. It's fantastic!

"One of the reasons Thomas Adès is such a successful composer," Kudirka

Michael Kudirka

© SALZBURGER FESTSPIELE / MONIKA RITTERSHAUS

continues, "is that he has the ability to write music that seems oddly familiar, partly because he is able to draw inspiration from the whole history of Western music and reimagine it in new contexts. In this opera, there are elements that are Wagnerian, and others that sound like you're listening to Francois Couperin's harpsichord music, and other moments like this grizzly parody of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Sheep May Safely Graze* done in this sort of sinister reimagining—as sheep are being led to the slaughter! And of course he's more than willing to push into unfamiliar territory. The musical styles in the opera are so diverse, there will be moments that some will find incredibly harsh; it can be a real assault on the senses. But there are also moments that are absolutely sublime—just the most beautiful, luscious sounds that make you think, 'I want to die listening to this music!'"

Of course, working on *The Exterminating Angel* has just been a small slice of what the always-busy Kudirka has been up to lately. The guitarist and educator, who received both his bachelor's and doctoral degrees from USC's Thornton School of Music, and his master's from the California Institute of the Arts, has always had one foot in classical guitar tradition and the other in cutting-edge modernity. For instance, the well-regarded (but now defunct) ensemble he founded, the Helios Guitar Quartet, played Kudirka's four-guitar arrangement of the first book of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, but also contemporary works by Ian Krouse, Brian Head, and others. As a solo performer and in his guitar duo with Eric Benzant-Feldra he has championed disparate modern composers such as Jeffrey Holmes, Dusan Bogdanovic, Miroslav Tadic (with whom he studied at CalArts), Chinary Ung, and many more.

But much of his recent focus has been on Duo Amantis with Tara Schwab, which has a repertoire spanning Giuliani to Ravel to Piazzolla to some of the aforementioned modernists. The pair's forthcoming CD on Doberman-Yppan's label, which Kudirka hopes will be out by summer, will focus primarily on 21st century pieces by Bogdanovic, Tadic, Holmes, Ourkouzounov, and others, eschewing some of the more "popular" pieces they often play live.

"Our feeling about recording," Kudirka offers, "is that pieces like Piazzolla's [*History of the Tango*] or Takamitsu's *Toward the Sea* have been recorded so many times already, yet there are many exceptional compositions that have never been recorded at all, or only once. It's a little tricky sometimes to carve out the area we want to live in with new music, because there is such a wide range of aesthetic sensibility with quite a bit of tribalism between camps. Ironically, I wouldn't even consider myself or my flute-and-guitar duo to be a part of the die-hard new music scene. There are festivals out there that would not accept what we do because it's far too accessible—and others that think we're entirely too avant-garde! In the end, though, this doesn't bother me because my guiding principle has always been that I will always commit myself to sharing the work of truly great composers of any time, including our own, and it doesn't matter if it's Francesco da Milano or Jeffrey Holmes… or Thomas Adès." **CG**

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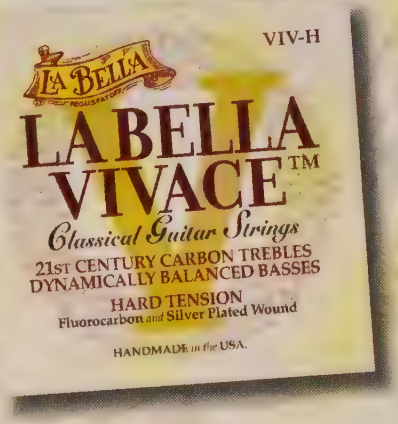

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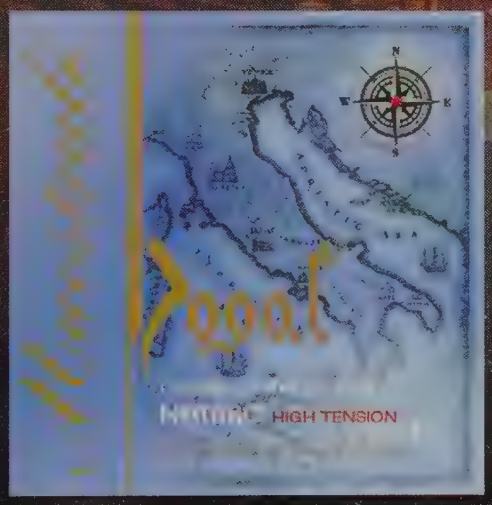

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RUSSIAN REVIVAL

Oleg Timofeyev and John Schneiderman celebrate the overlooked repertoire of the seven-string Russian guitar

by blair jackson

John Schneiderman plays a 1908 Mikhail Eroshkin guitar with four additional bass strings

On the surface, the lightly populated state of Iowa—in the heart of America's agricultural Midwest—seems an unlikely place to be the de facto world center of the current revival of Russian seven-string guitar. Yet this spring Iowa will see the eleventh edition of the International Annual Russian Guitar Seminar and Festival (IARGUS), an event that regularly draws many of the most important players and scholars involved with that instrument and its bountiful repertoire, much of it from the first half of the 19th century. Why Iowa? Because that's where Oleg Timofeyev, the Russian musician who has spearheaded the revival, has been living on and off since 1989.

In addition to the festival, Timofeyev made two CDs for Dorian Recordings titled *The Golden Age of the Russian Guitar* (*Vol. 1* came out in 1999, *Vol. 2* in 2000), which gave many classical guitar fans their first exposure to this unique strain of Romantic music, which draws heavily from Russian and Gypsy folk sources as well as Western classical elements. Among Timofeyev's other recordings are *Music of Russian Princesses from the Court of Catherine the Great* (2003), *A Tribute to Stesha: Early Music of Russian Gypsies* (2005), *Music of Mikhail Glinka / The Czar's Guitars* (2006), and *Souvenirs of Russia, The Czar's Guitars* (2010). The last two are collaborations with guitarist John Schneiderman.

However, in 2016, Timofeyev and Schneiderman, who have played together as The Czar's Guitars and in other configurations for more than a decade, completely outdid themselves, unleashing their *capo lavoro*: the ambitious seven-CD box *The Russian Guitar 1800–1850*, released by Brilliant Classics. The lovingly crafted set contains more than seven hours of music, divided into logical subsets: "The Moscow School," "The St. Petersburg School," "The Earliest Music for the Russian Guitar," "The True Romantics," and "Chamber Music with the Russian Guitar," plus entire discs devoted to the music of Andrey Sychra and Mikhail Vysotsky. The clearly written accompanying booklet offers much-needed history and context for the music, which was recorded at various sessions at Sono Luminus Studios in Boyce, Virginia, between 2008 and 2013.

"When I did my first recording for Dorian, *The Golden Age of the Russian Guitar*," Timofeyev says, "I realized that I chose unambitious, simple pieces; just a sampler, it was only the tip of the iceberg. Now it turns out this seven-CD set is also the tip of the iceberg—there's this whole alternative universe out there, so much more music to explore."

Before we dive into the making of this extraordinary and important box, perhaps some explanation about the seven-string Russian guitar itself might be helpful. "There are two types of 19th-century seven-string guitars," Schneiderman notes.

Oleg Timofeyev with 1847 Ivan Krasnoschiokov "quart-guitar" tuned a fourth higher than a regular 7-string

"The Western European seven-string guitar has six strings on the fingerboard, and one additional floating bass string off the fingerboard. I became interested in this type of guitar when I was putting together pieces for a program and recording of the music of Napoléon Coste. Having the seventh string off the fingerboard means it is never fretted and it also enables the player to make use of the left-hand thumb on the sixth string while leaving the seventh string open. The Russian seven-string guitar is a completely different instrument. The seven strings are all on the fingerboard which means the seventh string can be fretted. The tuning is completely different than the Spanish guitar. The Russian guitar is tuned to an open G chord—D G B d g b d. The fingerboards on the early Russian guitars are often crowned—convex—which facilitates playing with the left-hand thumb, a technique which is quite common on the sixth and seventh strings of the Russian guitar."

"John and I both come from playing lute," Timofeyev says, "and that means we take the choice of instrument, performance issues, and original fingerings very seriously. The Russian 19th-century masters were very inventive with their usage of the tuning, and the old editions and manuscripts are covered with fingerings. Often they are notated as a 'ratio'—thus 1/8 means 'first finger on the eighth fret.' The sophistication of the Russian repertoire is not so much in formal discoveries, but rather in the ingenious usage of the open-G tuning. Both John and I are trying to observe most of the nuances that are in the original. At times, it even involves the use of the left-hand thumb, something that may shock a classically trained guitarist. Once you have a tuning like that, it's a little similar to Baroque lute D-minor tuning. You can get these very airy, pleasant, ethereal textures, with a mixture of harp effects and slurs. John and I are religiously committed to that. So if it's written down we do it, and if it isn't written down, we still may do it," he says with a laugh.

Timofeyev was born into a musical family in Moscow. His mother played cello, his grandmother played piano, and his grandfather played the seven-string guitar. "It was a beautiful instrument," he says of that guitar, "and because it was in open-G tuning, even if you didn't know how to play it at all, you could already produce a chord with just a strum." He says he wasn't encouraged to go into music and was instead pushed to become an architect, so he attended art and math schools as part of that pursuit. On his own, however, "I got interested in classical guitar seriously and started taking lessons from an influential teacher in Moscow, Kamil Frautschi; his son Alexander was a very well-known Russian guitarist. In the early '80s, though, I fell in love with the lute and became interested in early music, and that is how I came to

the stage in 1989—as a lute player."

He left Russia and became an artist-in-residence at the University of Iowa and also studied with New York lutenist Patrick O'Brien. Timofeyev earned a master's degree in early music from the University of Southern California in 1993, and several years later, a Ph.D. in performance practice from Duke University in North Carolina. It was work on his dissertation at Duke that reignited Timofeyev's interest in Russian guitar. He, and his German wife and young daughter traveled to Moscow, "and I went to museums and archives and I found so many things—scrupulous writings and manuscripts with lots of fingerings.

"When I talked to Russian guitarists—the vast majority of whom played the six-string—about my interest in this old music for the seven-string guitar, they all said, 'Oh, there's nothing there, it's not interesting, it's boring. It's just variations on Russian folk songs. They're all the same.' From that I learned my lesson that you shouldn't listen to anybody!"

Over the years, he developed a database of composers and their works for the instrument, and managed to collect copies of scores from a wide variety of sources: "One person [in Russia] even sent me pictures he took with a black and white film camera, going from one library to another, because there was no other way for me to get that music."

Timofeyev says that during Russia's Soviet (communist) era—1922–1991—the seven-string guitar was suppressed, viewed as a bourgeois instrument and a relic of the country's czarist past. "Why didn't this truly Russian instrument, with its incredible background structured around Russian music, get to be heard in the country of its origin?" he asks incredulously.

"Instead, once Segovia played in Russia [first in 1926], we had feeble attempts to imitate the West to play the six-string guitar. Most of those attempts were pathetic and uninspiring, until the 1990s, when finally more Russians started studying abroad. Now there are quite a few good Russian guitarists; some have even won the GFA [Guitar Foundation of America competition] and other international competitions. But if you go to a standard guitar festival in Russia, you won't hear any Russian music! You'll hear flamenco and Albéniz, Granados, Villa-Lobos, Domeniconi..."

Many of the composers on *The Russian Guitar 1800–1850*—most Russian, but some not—will be new to readers of this magazine, and dozens of the pieces are world premiere recordings, including the entirety of Disc 7, "Chamber Music with the Russian Guitar," which features rarities such as a lovely short sonata for violin and guitar by Antoine L'Hoyer, several guitar-and-pianoforte works, and seven on which the guitar accompanies a soprano.

"I really wanted music with voice and other instruments," Timofeyev comments. "In the 19th century there were no professional guitarists in Russia. There was lots of music written by aristocrats who were shy to give their names and would add the word 'amateur' after their name if they did supply it. The people who played were mostly retired doctors, military officers, landlords, merchants, aristocrats—people who played at their leisure—so there is very little ensemble music, but I was pleased that I managed to find some."

Asked whom he felt are the most significant composers on the set, Timofeyev pauses thoughtfully, then relates: "Andrey Sychra [1773–1850] was a very hard-working person and he sort of laid the foundation of the whole thing and created the style. It's important that he was a harpist before he became a guitarist, because he was a master of textures, of various arpeggios, and his imagination was almost unlimited. However, when it comes to originality and creating memorable melodies, he's not necessarily the best. He was not Russian [he was a Czech raised in Lithuania] and never really became Russian, so his music tends to sound cosmopolitan, so in some ways it's not that different from the style of Sor or Giuliani.

"But the composer who really strikes me as a genius is the founder of the Moscow School, Mikhail Vysotsky [1791–1837], who was the son of a serf, got some guitar instruction, spent a lot of time with the Gypsies, and adopted the style of 'singing' in his playing, which was fashionable in Russian-Gypsy entertainment of that time. He was barely literate, so there are lots of mistakes and incorrect spots in his music, so one needs to look at them closely. But he was able to paint extremely exciting canvases with a very limited palette. For example, all of his best works are variations on Russian folk songs, but they're all quite different."

Timofeyev and Schneiderman initially knew each other only through recordings—Oleg owned a couple of John's lute CDs and John had a copy of Oleg's first *Golden Age* disc. Timofeyev also had seen Schneiderman perform with some Early Music ensembles. Schneiderman says, "We first met when Oleg was giving a lecture-demonstration on the Russian guitar that was sponsored by the Southern California Early Music Society. Although I had already found the music interesting and beautiful, I did not fall in love with the instrument until I heard and saw it in person. Oleg was playing on a beautiful 19th-century Russian guitar, and seeing the instrument played while hearing the music, it struck me how well it lay on the fingerboard, and how many interesting effects the open-G tuning facilitated.

"I was excited and spoke to Oleg after the presentation," he continues. "He mentioned that there was a substantial duo

repertoire for the instrument and asked if I was interested in learning how to read in the tuning in order to explore some of it. I was of course more than interested, and about a week later Oleg sent me a gorgeous 19th-century Russian seven-string guitar, heavily ornamented with mother of pearl and veneered in tortoiseshell. It was in its original case, which also was a work of art. It was one of the most beautiful 19th-century guitars I'd ever seen. The first thing I did was call him up and reprimand him for sending me such a valuable instrument—the risk of damage seemed too great, but thankfully it had arrived safe and sound. Along with the guitar, Oleg sent me a pile of music. I spent time every day reading in the new tuning. When I finally began to make mistakes when I was reading on the Spanish guitar, then I knew the Russian tuning was beginning to sink in. The guitar was so beautiful we began to refer to it as 'The Czar's Guitar,' and when we were later trying to think of a name for the duo, Oleg's wife, Sabine, suggested 'The Czar's Guitars' and we went with it."

Many of those two-guitar pieces are on the box set; for the many solo guitar works, the pair divvied them up, with each expressing certain preferences here and there, "and if there was some overlap," Schneiderman says, "we might negotiate a bit. If there was something he held near and dear, then I probably wouldn't see it. Oleg was and is more familiar with the repertoire overall, so in some situations he would suggest pieces he thought I might be successful with. It might be a piece with a folk flavor to it, as Oleg knows I have a background in folk music. That background might even lead to my fingering the piece in a particular manner that one who is only schooled in classical playing might not consider. It is a huge goldmine of repertoire that we had to sift through. This project forced me to become proficient on the instrument, and to cover a larger spectrum of repertoire in a shorter period of time than I would have left on my own accord."

The duo will, not surprisingly, be celebrating the release of the box with an event at this year's IARGUS, which takes place May 18–21, for the first time in four Iowa locales: Iowa City (where Timofeyev lives and teaches), Coralville, Dubuque, and Des Moines.

Might there be more collaborations between the two on this music down the road? "The biggest problem Oleg and I have is narrowing it down to which project to work on next," Schneiderman offers. "As massive as the box set seemed, we have really only scratched the surface; there are many more gems waiting to be discovered!"

For more, visit russian-guitar.com.

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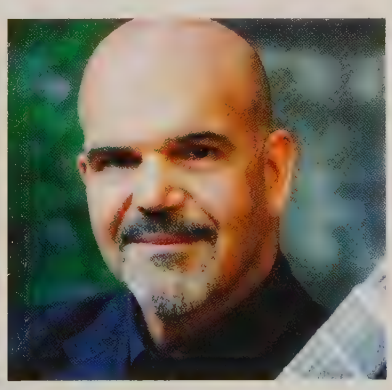

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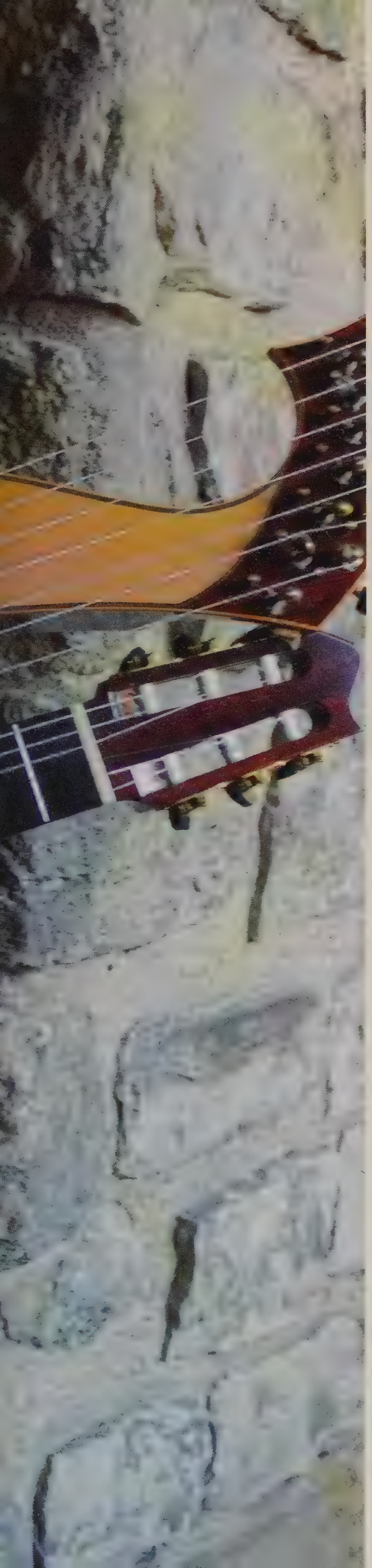


MURIEL ANDERSON

CLASSICAL GUITARIST REACHES BEYOND CLASSICAL MUSIC

BY KATHLEEN A. BERGERON

Muiel Anderson is sitting onstage in an art gallery in Salisbury, North Carolina, talking to a group of guitarists who have come for a master class, a few hours before her own evening performance. She's relating to them how, one day while she was playing a small gig in Chicago, Jimmy Page, lead guitarist and founder of the heavy metal band Led Zeppelin, came and sat to listen to the music. They ended up passing the guitar back and forth. "I asked him, 'Teach me a song you wrote,' and he showed me this…" And she begins to play to the master class the opening lines of "Stairway to Heaven," the band's most famous tune.

It's a funny moment. The song is so overwhelmingly popular, especially among young men enamored with learning to play rock guitar, that some exasperated music store owners are reputed to have posted signs in the electric guitars section, saying "No 'Stairway to Heaven.'"

But it's particularly odd to hear that song at a master class given by someone with such heavy credentials: She studied with Christopher Parkening, has recorded more than a dozen albums, as well as instructional CDs and songbooks, and was the 1989 National Fingerpicking Guitar Champion, to list just a few of her accomplishments. But for Anderson, it was just another encounter with fellow amazing guitarist. The list of people she has sat in with is staggering—Doc Watson, Parkening, Chet Atkins, Tommy Emmanuel, Earl Klugh, and Les Paul among them.

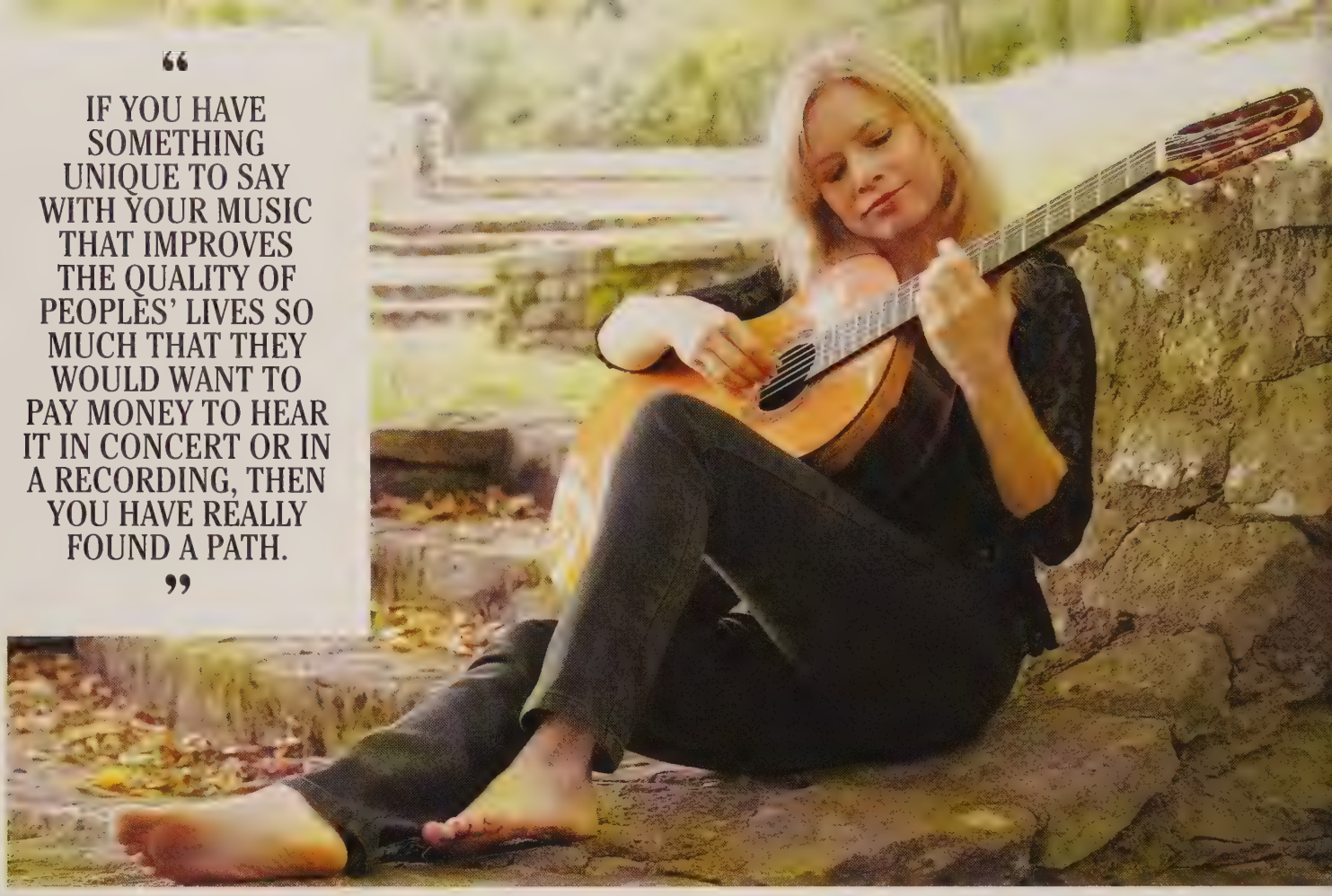
In fact, another encounter, similar to the one with Page, resulted in an entire album of music in the flamenco style. Anderson was in Europe attending a music festival and walked by a booth promoting the signature line of guitars of the German flamenco duo, Tierra Negra. Tierra Negra's Leo Henrichs relates that, "When we got there one morning, we found Muriel with one of our guitars playing her song 'Angelina Baker.' We immediately grabbed guitars as well, and started jamming with her for the very first time. You could say that the first communication between the three of us was nonverbal—it was musical." Their connection was strong enough they ended up making an album (2009's *New World Flamenco*) and going on a 50-show U.S. tour together.

As her concert begins a few hours later, Anderson is back onstage with two instruments: a thin-bodied, flamenco-style guitar made of cypress, and a 21-string harp guitar. Anderson also plays steel-string guitar, although on this tour she is using only the two instruments onstage. Her performance is a tour de force of guitar music and more: Pieces include many of her own compositions, as well as works from George Harrison, J.S. Bach, Don McLean, and Isaac Albéniz. At one point, she plays a Japanese folk song, making her guitar sound like a koto, the 13-stringed instrument of Japan. She later plays her guitar like the individual instruments in a bluegrass band—guitar, banjo, mandolin, and fiddle.

Clearly, this woman has the talent to be a standout in any genre of guitar music she might choose. But her appreciation of music is so universal she would probably be hard-pressed to confine herself to any single one.

She agreed to answer a few questions about her music and her particular approach to it. >>>

> “IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING UNIQUE TO SAY WITH YOUR MUSIC THAT IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF PEOPLES’ LIVES SO MUCH THAT THEY WOULD WANT TO PAY MONEY TO HEAR IT IN CONCERT OR IN A RECORDING, THEN YOU HAVE REALLY FOUND A PATH.”



CLASSICAL GUITAR: Where did you obtain your classical guitar training?

MURIEL ANDERSON: DePaul University [Chicago, Illinois], where I studied with Leon Borkowski, a former student of Christopher Parkening. Leon Borkowski was a good teacher for me, as he gave guidance yet challenged me to find techniques and interpretation for myself.

CG: I understand that you also had Parkening himself as a teacher?

ANDERSON: I took master classes from him in Bozeman, Montana. He was very inspirational and musical in his instruction. I have great respect for him as a person and his virtuosity on the instrument—a true master of phrasing and tone on the guitar. Later, he invited me to give a master class for his students at Pepperdine University in California. That was a real honor for me, and a testament that he appreciated a variety of musical styles, and was open to showing other styles and techniques to his students.

CG: You've played in a wide variety of musical genres. Do you find that some of your techniques for one type of guitar playing carry over to another type? For example, things like *rasgueado*, slapping, or *golpe* are common in flamenco, but not so much in classical or pop. Do you ever find yourself dropping something like that from classical or flamenco into something like a Beatles tune?

ANDERSON: Only when the music calls for it. I use any of the techniques that I have learned—in any style—to get a certain feel or sound. If I don't have a technique that will get the desired effect, I will work until I create my own technique. Some of these I have on my YouTube channel, and some are in my TrueFire DVD *50 Right Hand Techniques*.

CG: Similarly, when you are composing a piece, do you restrict yourself to a particular style, or do you pull from every style you have available to you?

ANDERSON: When I write a tune, I tend to transport myself to a time or place. So, for instance, in the new tune I call “The Matador,” it's mostly Spanish and flamenco techniques. The one in 5/8-time inspired by Bach, “Prelude to a New Morning,” is all classical technique. And the ragtime tune, “A Fine Pickle” is pure fingerstyle, also using a thumb technique I learned from [American acoustic guitar master] Leo Kottke. In the Japanese piece, “Sakura,” to get the koto sound, I use a combination of a classical vibrato and a rock up-and-down vibrato, in addition to playing off the “wrong” side of the nail and an attention to placing the beat slightly behind in places. So every tune is dramatically different.

CG: You play both nylon- and steel-string instruments, as well as harp guitar. Do you play all three in concert, or do you concentrate on one or two?

ANDERSON: I play primarily nylon string. This tour, I am traveling with my 21-string harp guitar, as well as a flamenco guitar. Usually I have a smaller harp guitar on tour, yet this current tour is all by land—or sailboat—and I get to travel with my favorite instrument. It is a Doolin custom harp guitar with nylon strings on the guitar part and sub basses, and steel strings on the super-trebles. If there is a local guitar-builder at my shows, I enjoy playing some tunes on his or her instrument, which may be a steel string, or, in the case of the recent tour through Switzerland, a harp guitar that folds into a backpack!

CG: Yes, I was looking at the Facebook site for the maker of that harp guitar—Brunner, in Switzerland, I believe—and they have a video of you that's had over two million views!

ANDERSON: Fun, that's the first time that's happened. I just played a classical-style arrangement of Mark Knopfler's "Why Worry?" on the Brunner folding harp guitar, he posted it once, and it took off.

CG: Is it hard for you to change from one instrument to another, particularly during a performance? Are the necks of the instruments shaped similarly in order to make the transition easier?

ANDERSON: I think of them kind of like different instruments, and my hands adjust to the different neck widths. The hardest part is that my harp guitars have different numbers of bass strings, which puts the sub-bass notes in different places.

CG: Do you have any difficulties with trimming your nails to accommodate both nylon and steel strings?

ANDERSON: I use the Luthier Cloth Nail Files to get the edge of the nail very, very smooth. When I'm playing a steel-string guitar or steel-string super-trebles, I have to sand my fingernails more often, because even the smallest rough spot can quickly become a larger nick. If I get a tear in the nail, I use five-minute epoxy instead of superglue. The epoxy is slightly rubbery, and it doesn't damage the real nail u nderneath. I try to keep the very edge of the natural nail if possible. After a few days, I will peel up the epoxy and apply new, until the nail has grown out. If I break the entire nail off, I've found the press-on nails with glue already on the nail—aided with a small piece of surgical tape over the top—will usually last for one concert, or about three days of rehearsing.

CG: Do you have any pedagogical advice for aspiring classical guitarists?

ANDERSON: It is your job not only to keep this beautiful style of guitar-playing alive, but also to add something to the world. Many classical guitarists tend to play the same beautiful old pieces everyone else plays, or modern dissonant tunes that are, for most people, not enjoyable to listen to. If you have something unique to say with your music that improves the quality of people's lives so much that they would want to pay money to hear it in concert or in a recording, then you have really found a path. There are beautiful pieces that are not getting out for people to hear, like pieces by Jorge Morel for instance.

CG: Any particular compositions of yours? I see that almost all your compositions and arrangements are available on the sheet music page of murielanderson.com.

ANDERSON: I'd be happy to see more classical players doing "Prelude to a New Morning," "Arioso," or "Parisian Waltz." There are a fair number of Japanese guitarists now playing "Bells for Marcel" or "Hometown," and a few guitar and cello duos have discovered some of the tunes from my *New Classics for Guitar and Cello* album.

CG: Any words for people learning to play guitar on the importance of practice?

ANDERSON: I like to be a listener as well as a player at all times. Enjoy the sound of your instrument, and listen for where the music wants to go. It's never too soon to put the emotion into the music, even if just playing a scale. If you don't have a drummer to play with, a metronome is a really good idea. [Bassist] Victor Wooten practices with putting the metronome not only on the beat, but also on the off-beat and any beat of the measure, and even on the "swing" of the off-beat. That's amazing control of rhythm and I wish I did that more when I was first learning.

CG: What do you think of the concept of learning guitar online? There are a lot of methods out there—any thoughts?

ANDERSON: Now there are online and DVD courses that can offer a lot. Personally, I learn best from a human being, one-on-one.

CG: How about something like Skype?

ANDERSON: Yes, I give personal Skype lessons, and I took a couple of Skype lessons from Claude LaFlamme to learn "Eleanor Rigby" on the harp guitar.

CG: You've recorded a wide variety of music with an amazing spectrum of musicians—country, bluegrass, pop, flamenco, classical. Are there any limits to what you'll play?

ANDERSON: Yes. I don't play music that doesn't stir me or make me happy in some way.

CG: Your album, *Nightlight Daylight*, is an amazing piece of work. You've got two hours of music on a double CD, plus fiber optics built into the cover so people can press a space on it and see the evening sky light up in the picture. Plus a little business card inside the album that's actually four pop-out guitar picks. This was obviously a labor of love, and you've received a number of awards for it. What motivated you to put all this in one package?

ANDERSON: You're right in that it was a labor of love, kind of my expression or gift to the world. I wanted it to be a whole experience—one album to relax to and one album to wake-up to. When I wanted strings, I hired the Nashville Symphony string section at Oceanway studio. When I wanted some jazzy back and forth fills, I asked [guitarists] Stanley Jordan and Earl Klugh. I didn't even keep track of expenses; I just did everything to make the music come alive. Every minute of recording was a joy. I realized that every person involved in the project was not only a great artist but also a great person. That energy goes into the music.

CG: Yes, and obviously people can feel it, as witnessed by the awards.

ANDERSON: Some of those awards are for the artwork as well as the music. But more importantly is that, in the process, I found my soul mate in Bryan [Allen] the photo-artist, and we are now touring together with an audio-visual show we call *Wonderlust*.

CG: So what's next for Muriel Anderson?

ANDERSON: I have new tunes that I have written for the *Wonderlust* show, and I'm waiting for it to all fall together in an organic way into a bigger picture much like the *Nightlight Daylight* CD did. I can feel that's just around the corner. **CG**

Happy Birthday, Don Antonio!

Love classical guitar? Then consider breaking out a bottle of bubbly this June to toast the 200th birthday of influential luthier Antonio de Torres.

BY KATHLEEN A. BERGERON

Born June 13, 1817, in La Cañada de San Urbano, Spain, Antonio de Torres Jurado changed the shape, sound, and worldwide appeal of the guitar, which is today arguably the most popular instrument on the planet. Here is what a few notable authors have said about Torres:

"The most influential Spanish guitar builder of all time." —Robert Shaw, *Hand Made, Hand Played: The Art and Craft of Contemporary Guitars*

"The man to whom we owe the modern concert guitar." —Maurice J. Summerfield, *The Classical Guitar: Its Evolution, Players and Personalities Since 1800*

"All modern guitar-makers owe an incalculable debt to Antonio de Torres Jurado, the man whose 19th century guitar designs are still closely followed…" —Ralph Deyner, *The Guitar Handbook*

Prior to Torres, guitars were very much a mixed bag—some large, some small, some with multiple courses of strings (that is, sets of two strings in combinations of four, five, six, eight or more). Many had gold, silver, precious gems, and other body and neck adornments. Most important is that their *sound* was rarely anywhere near what we have today.

No less an authority than Julian Bream opined that the old classical guitar, prior to Torres, was "to some extent an ill thought-out instrument" because it was based on the 18th century Baroque guitar, but with single strings instead of pairs, and with an extra bass string added. This would seem to put the guitar into a potentially more demanding role. "But for some reason," Bream said, "there was little or no compensation reflected in the sound chamber within the instrument in order to resonate the newly found lower frequencies." That compensation would not occur until Antonio de Torres came along.

Torres' genius was not that he personally re-invented the design of the instrument, but rather that he successfully brought together several innovations in guitar construction, many of which had been around for decades. Some were the pioneering work of others, but Torres refined them and incorporated them into his own construction process. The result was that his instruments were so strikingly better in overall sound quality, as well as playability, that they sharply changed the Spanish school of guitar construction, and then, the entire world's.

Take just one innovation as an example: the structural braces that Torres affixed to the underside of his guitars' soundboards. His system had either five or seven struts (depending on the size of the guitar), arranged in a fan-like configuration, with two more placed diagonally below them. Torres biographer—and outstanding luthier himself—José Romanillos describes them as a kite-like configuration. One could also describe it as like the front view of an old-fashioned steam train, complete with cowcatcher. Other luthiers had used a similar setup, such as Joseph Benedid and Francisco Sanguino in the 1780s, and Louis Panormo in the early decades of the 1800s. But theirs were not as symmetrically and harmonically arranged as those of Torres. Their soundboards were relatively thick, so the struts had questionable acoustic benefits. Torres' strut configuration, combined with the use of a much thinner and domed soundboard, and a larger lower bout, resulted in better sound quality and ease of playing.

Torres' combination of innovations have had an incalculable influence on generations of classical-guitar builders that have followed him: Fellow Spanish luthiers such as Romanillos, Manuel Ramirez, Santos Hernandez, Ignacio Fleta, and Domingo Esteso, German Hermann Hauser (and his heirs), and Australian Greg Smallman, are just some of the best-known luthiers who have embraced the Torres approach.

But even as they used Torres' formula as a foundation, luthiers have continued to search for improvements, such as modifying the bracing concept in various ways, or using space-age materials unavailable to Torres, such as carbon fibers and epoxy resins. Sometimes the changes have been effective, sometimes they haven't. But, as David Collett, president of Guitar Salon International, notes, "It's hard for a builder to move very far away from Torres."

CARPENTER TO LUTHIER

The son of a tax collector, Antonio de Torres was trained as a carpenter and became a member of the local guild by the time he was out of his teens. But because the young man had a growing family, he sought to earn extra money by also making guitars on the side. In the 1850s, when Torres was in his early 30s, the famed virtuoso guitarist Julián Arcas (1832–1882) became very interested in a new career: guitar construction. Arcas heard one of Torres' guitars played at a flamenco event and sought out its maker. Upon meeting him, Arcas encouraged Torres to go into the profession full-time. Torres followed Arcas' advice and, over the years, managed to build a significant reputation. The problem was that, in order to survive financially, a luthier had to make less-expensive instruments for non-professionals, as well as fine guitars for professionals. Logically, this would mean that cheaper guitars, built for the masses, would be built faster and with less care. But for Torres, the primary difference between the two was in the materials used. Yes, there was some corner-cutting, but overall, all of his guitars were well-built, no matter whom the customer might be. An analysis of surviving Torres guitars bears this out.

Alas, even with this concession to economic realities, by the early 1870s Torres found he was not making enough money to support his family so he decided to forego guitar-building to run a china shop. Fortunately for the guitar world, however, within a couple of years, Torres was back to building instruments. He numbered his guitars during this post-china shop period, or, as he called it, his second epoch, and today, that is how Torres instruments are designated: first epoch or second epoch, with a number approximating their chronological order.

1888 Torres SE 114, Sheldon Urlik

It is noteworthy that while many of the earlier influential guitar-makers worked in the major economic and artistic centers of Europe—René Lacôte in Paris, Johann Stauffer in Vienna, and the Panormo family in London—Torres spent most of his life in rural southern Spain. Yet, this man had more impact on the art and science of building classical guitars than any other single individual. It may be a perfect proof for the old maxim that if you can build a better mousetrap, the world will beat a pathway to your door… no matter where that door lies.

That is precisely what happened with Torres, thanks in large part to three successive guitarists: Arcas, Francisco Tárrega, and Miguel Llobet. When Arcas first heard that Torres-built instrument in Sevilla, he not only encouraged him to go full-time into the profession, but also challenged him to develop a guitar with a better sound and volume than the ones Arcas had been using for performances. The guitarist had no doubt seen and heard a wide range of instruments throughout his career, touring all over Europe.

Those Torres-built instruments then caught the ears of others, including the young Francisco Tárrega, who had heard Arcas play his Torres in concert in Castellon de la Plana, some 440 miles northeast of Torres' home in Sevilla. Tárrega traveled from his home in Barcelona to Torres' workshop, seeking a guitar similar to the one he had heard Arcas play. Initially, Torres offered him one of his less expensive guitars, but once he heard Tárrega play, he brought out his personal instrument and offered it to the young guitarist.

Although Tárrega was not widely known at the time, his popularity would later soar, and he would spread the gospel according to Torres—his guitars—through his many tours of Europe as a virtuoso guitarist and teacher. Also, as Romanillos speculates about Tárrega, "He played that instrument for over 20 years, and it is not too adventurous to suggest that Torres' guitar was the basis for a new awareness of the possibilities of the guitar as a serious musical instrument." And besides being a great player, Tárrega would go on to greatly increase the repertoire of the classical guitar, not only with his own compositions, but also by transcribing the works of others, including Chopin, Beethoven, Bach, and Albéniz.

Among Tárrega's pupils was Miguel Llobet, who would tour throughout Europe, South America, and the United States in the early 1900s playing a Torres guitar, further spreading the knowledge of the Torres concepts. In 1913, for example, Llobet gave a performance in Germany attended by a local luthier named Hermann Hauser. Hauser was intrigued enough that he studied Llobet's guitar and soon after applied many of its attributes to his own work.

And so it would go. A guitarist might hear the pure-sounding Torres guitar owned by a performer and ask where the player purchased it. Or a luthier might ask to examine the instrument and copy some of its qualities. Over time, the word was passed along. So, while Torres himself was not a resident of major centers of art and culture, his instruments were frequent visitors to such areas. It was Andrés Segovia who would later take the classical guitar to major worldwide popularity, and the best guitars he used were made by Manuel Ramirez, Hermann Hauser, and Ignacio Fleta—all, to some degree, "students" of the Torres school of guitar construction.

AN ENDURING LEGACY

How many instruments did Torres himself build? Nobody knows, exactly. Romanillos estimates the number at around 320 guitars. Eighty-eight had been located by the time Romanillo's still-definitive biography of Torres was published in 1987, and several other guitars have been located since then. Legend has it that Torres even built a collapsible guitar that he could assemble or take a part in a few minutes. Did such a guitar exist? Is it one of the 200-plus instruments that have either been destroyed, lost, or remain hidden away? It's always possible that somewhere, gathering dust in an attic or basement, another Torres is waiting to be discovered.

But in the rare event that a Torres guitar does come up for sale and you're tempted to bid on it, be prepared to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars. It's a little reminiscent of the prices obtained for violins built by another Antonio—the Italian luthier Antonio Stradivari (c. 1644–1737). Fewer than 600 of Stradivari's violins survive, and their price tags soar into the millions of dollars. But collecting old classical guitars did not get seriously underway until the 1950s, while the market for older violins has been strong since the early years of the 20th century. So perhaps in the coming

decades, we may see a Torres sell in the seven figures.

One might reasonably wonder: Do these instruments bring such a high price because of their history in the development of guitar design, or because of their provenance? Or is it truly because of their ability to make beautiful music? Provenance, after all, seems to be very important to some people. In November 2015, for example, a 1962 Gibson J-160E went for a cool $2.4 million—not for its musicality, but because it was owned by John Lennon in the early years of the Beatles.

Instruments by Torres and Stradivari likewise have noteworthy histories, but clearly, it is their sound that makes them stand out. We know that the reason Arcas, Tárrega, and Llobet were each attracted to the Torres instruments was their sound. And even today, according to those with well-trained ears, a Torres does not sound like any other guitar. Upon hearing a performance on a Torres guitar, one reviewer in 1889 gushed, "Each string carries the voices and modulation of a thousand angels, his guitar is the temple of emotions, the Arcanum of abundance that moves and delights the heart escaping in sighs from those threads that seem guardians of mermaids' songs."

Sheldon Urlik, who has four Torres guitars in his private collection, and is the author of *A Collection of Fine Spanish Guitars from Torres to the Present*, describes one of them—more than a century and a quarter after the luthier built it—this way: "The clarity of tone, purity of timbre, and concentrated quality of the music from this guitar seem miraculous."

Players have spoken of how easy Torres guitars are to play, how responsive they are when a string is plucked. David Collett says it well: "Torres guitars allow you to think something, and the guitar does it."

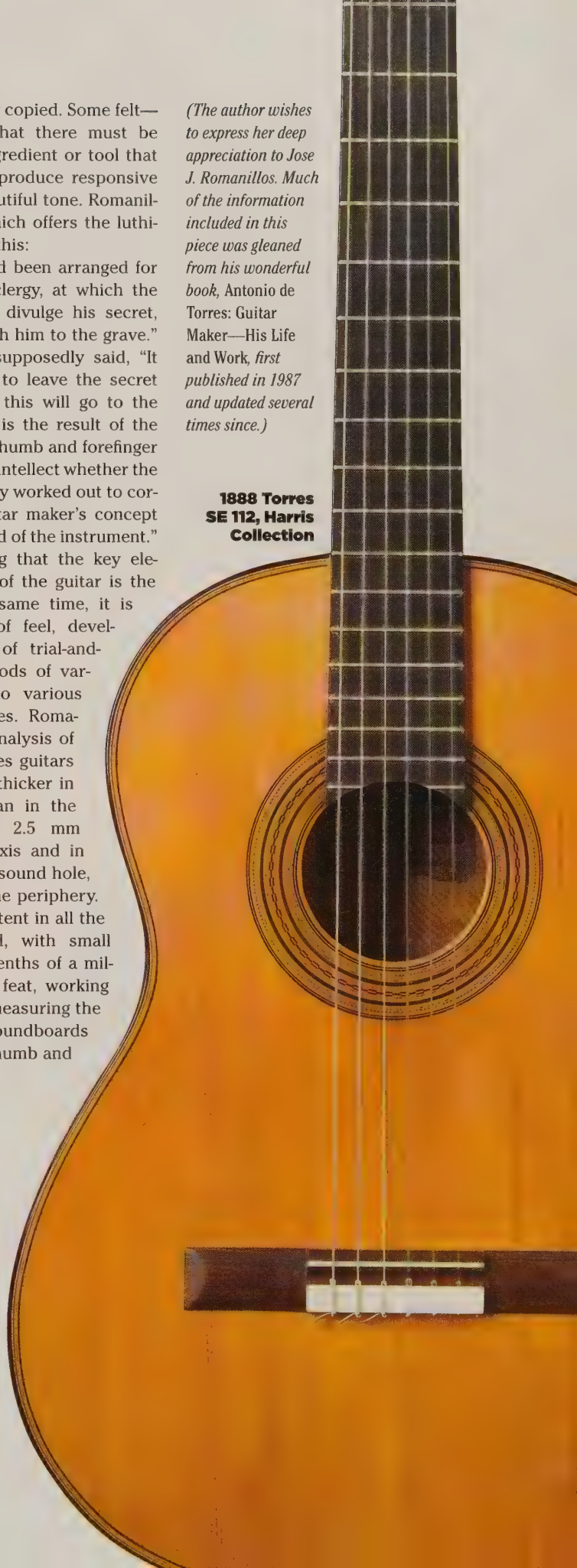
Also, both Antonios—Torres and Stradivari—achieved a level of individual artistry that, arguably, cannot be totally duplicated. Stradivari violins have been studied with x-rays, electron microscopes, spectrometers, and dendrochronological analysis, all in an effort to find the special element that makes them sound better than other violins. The results have been disappointing. Torres' instruments have been similarly analyzed. While the successful Torres recipe of specific innovations was soon copied by others, there always remained something missing that could not be precisely copied. Some felt—as with Stradivari—that there must be some other secret ingredient or tool that allowed this man to produce responsive guitars with such beautiful tone. Romanillos relates a story which offers the luthier's own thoughts on this:

A dinner party had been arranged for Torres by the local clergy, at which the luthier was asked to divulge his secret, "and not to take it with him to the grave." In response, Torres supposedly said, "It is impossible for me to leave the secret behind for posterity; this will go to the tomb with me, for it is the result of the feel of the tips of the thumb and forefinger communicating to my intellect whether the soundboard is properly worked out to correspond with the guitar maker's concept and the sound required of the instrument."

Torres was stating that the key element of the success of the guitar is the soundboard. At the same time, it is the luthier's sense of feel, developed over decades of trial-and-error working on woods of various types, honed to various widths and flexibilities. Romanillos notes that an analysis of soundboards on Torres guitars found that they "are thicker in the central area...than in the periphery, averaging 2.5 mm around the central axis and in the upper part of the sound hole, to about 1.4 mm in the periphery. This pattern is consistent in all the guitars we examined, with small differences of a few tenths of a millimeter." An amazing feat, working with hand tools and measuring the thickness of the soundboards with "the tips of his thumb and forefinger."

It's not surprising, that for those well-heeled types who collect Spanish guitars, owning a Torres—or even being its temporary custodian before it is eventually passed on to the next person—is the ultimate. As for the rest of us, at least we can still hear them played by a master guitarist.

(The author wishes to express her deep appreciation to Jose J. Romanillos. Much of the information included in this piece was gleaned from his wonderful book, Antonio de Torres: Guitar Maker—His Life and Work, *first published in 1987 and updated several times since.)*



1888 Torres SE 112, Harris Collection

TORRES INNOVATIONS

Torres incorporated numerous innovations into his guitar designs. Without getting *too* deep into technical aspects, here is a brief listing of several:

SHAPE: The *plantilla*—the overall shape of the guitar body—was very important to Torres. Most earlier guitars were very slim and had a wider waist than what Torres preferred. Legend has it that Torres' inspiration for the shape of his instruments was a beautiful woman he saw in Sevilla. He did retain the earlier concept of having the waist located 2/5 of the way down the body.

SIZE: While Torres did build some smaller instruments, his primary focus was on larger ones, especially for concert guitars. Jose Romanillos notes in his biography of Torres: "From the moment that Torres introduced the large *plantilla* for the *guitarra fina* (best guitar) in the early 1850s, the small-bodied guitar prevalent in the early decades of the 19th century became extinct as a concert instrument."

SOUNDBOARD: To Torres, the soundboard was the most important element in the instrument's music-making quality. He took great care in the wood selection, as well as the shaping and arching of the soundboard. Reducing its thickness allowed it to vibrate more easily when the strings are plucked or strummed.

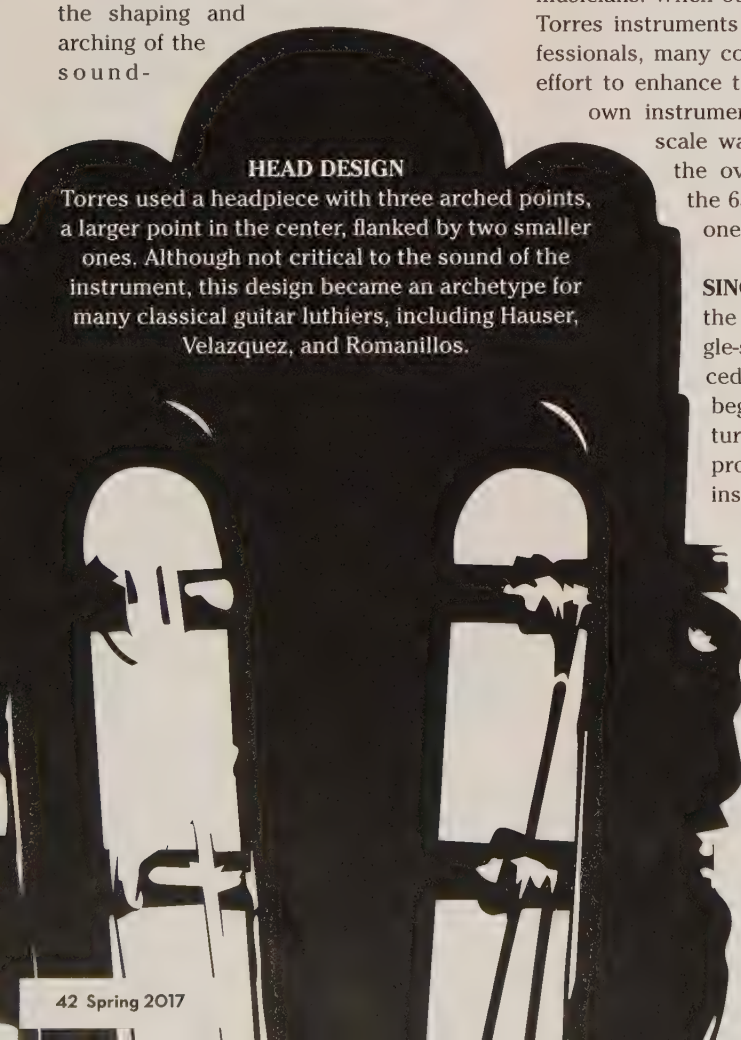
FAN BRACING: Having a soundboard that was thinner and larger in surface area than was typical required significant structural support. For that, Torres chose a "fan" design. Fan struts were initiated by the Andalusian school of guitar makers. According to Romanillos, "This idea can be traced back to Sevilla and to the work of Francisco Sanguino, a master craftsman whose work stands out among his contemporaries." Torres' bracing pattern typically included either five or eight struts.

650 MM SCALE LENGTH: As with other aspects of his guitar design, Torres did not initiate the use of the 650 mm scale length; several other luthiers had used it previously. And he did not use it on all of his instruments. But he did favor it for the concert guitars he built for professional musicians. When other luthiers heard the Torres instruments played by those professionals, many copied the Torres in an effort to enhance the playability of their own instruments, and the 650 mm scale was, essentially, part of the overall package. Today, the 650 mm string length is one of the standards.

SINGLE STRINGS: Again, the production of single-stringed guitars preceded Torres. At the beginning of the 19th century, Agustin Caro was producing single-stringed instruments in Granada. But there were still plenty of luthiers building their instruments with multiple courses of strings when Torres was building. In fact, Torres himself built at least three 11-string guitars during his second epoch. But clearly, the 6-string was his primary focus.

BRIDGE
With a larger and wider soundboard than most contemporary guitars, Torres had to determine the ideal spot for locating the bridge. He chose a spot roughly in the center of the lower bout.

HEAD DESIGN
Torres used a headpiece with three arched points, a larger point in the center, flanked by two smaller ones. Although not critical to the sound of the instrument, this design became an archetype for many classical guitar luthiers, including Hauser, Velazquez, and Romanillos.



RESTRAINED USE OF ORNAMENTATION: Prior to Torres, guitar builders often covered their creations with silver, gold, jewels and other enhancements. Torres guitars are noteworthy for their simplicity and subtlety, with the primary enhancements being their rosettes and perhaps the purfling.

TORNAVOZ: A cylindrical metal device placed beneath the soundhole, its megaphone-like appearance tells its purpose: to amplify the sound and increase sustain. Torres' famous "La Leona" guitar (FE 04) is the earliest surviving guitar with a tornavoz, so it is quite possible that Torres himself was its inventor. Although other luthiers picked up on the use of this internal device, Torres virtually abandoned it in his second epoch. Romanillos states that 17 of the 39 known guitars in Torres' first epoch had a tornavoz fitted, while only two out of the 49 known guitars in his second epoch (as of his book's 1990 edition) had them. By the 1950s, the device had gone out of favor, though there are still luthiers who employ them. —*KB*

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1883 Torres SE 54, Sheldon Urlik

SOME NOTEWORTHY TORRES GUITARS

It goes without saying that any Torres guitar is, by definition, noteworthy. Those listed here, however, have unique aspects that make them stand out. The designation "FE" is for "First Epoch," the period from 1852 up to the early 1870s, when Torres briefly retired from guitar-making. The second epoch (SE) began in 1875.

FE 04: Made in 1856, Torres' most famous guitar is also the only one he named: "La Leona." The name translates as "the lioness," although the guitar was given its name to compare it with the full volume and sound quality of the male lion. However, because the Spanish word for guitar is in the feminine gender, it could not be given a name with the masculine gender such as *león* (lion). This is the only guitar that Torres would not part with during his lifetime, and he sometimes referred to the plainly appointed guitar as "La Fea," meaning "the ugly one." Still, it is the earliest known instrument in which Torres incorporated most of the innovations he would employ in his guitar making. It has been speculated that La Leona was his pattern or guide for all his later guitars, and it was the sound that set the instrument apart. At a November 1992 memorial ceremony honoring Torres on the centenary of his death, a monument was unveiled in Almeria, Spain. It included a bronze bust of Torres as well as a white marble statue of a guitar with the head of a lioness at the top, symbolizing La Leona. La Leona is currently in a private collection in Germany, but can be heard on recordings.

FE 08: Torres won a bronze prize for this guitar at the Sevilla Exhibition in 1858. Although Torres rarely went in for decoration, this has been called his *magnum opus*, demonstrating his mastery of woodworking. Spanish guitarist and teacher Domingo Prat, a pupil of Miguel Llobet, referred to this instrument as *La guitarra cumbre* ("the supreme guitar"). FE 08 has a four-piece back of birds-eye maple with matching wood for the sides and a two-piece spruce top. The soundboard, back, and ribs have herringbone inlays. It also has a rosette with mother-of-pearl lozenges alternating with a checkerboard pattern; a highly ornamented bridge; solid silver T-shaped frets and silver nut; and a mother-of-pearl plaque (rather than a paper label) engraved with his name and the date.

FE 14: The most unusual Torres guitar is the one he made in 1862 using *papier-mâché*. For Torres, this instrument was an experiment to test his theory that the soundboard is the most critical aspect of the guitar's sound, and that the woods used for the back and sides were not as important. The soundboard itself is of spruce, and, rather than wood, the back and sides are made of papier-mâché, reinforced with cedar and pine. The instrument is owned by the Museu de la Musica, in Barcelona.

FE 17: Guitarist and teacher Emilio Pujol (1886–1980) regarded this as the best guitar he had ever heard. This was Torres' personal instrument, made in 1864, and is the guitar he sold to Francisco Tárrega in 1869 when the young guitarist visited the luthier's shop in Sevilla. Its soundboard is spruce, and the back and sides are of matched flamed maple. It bears cigarette burns in several places, due to Tárrega's habit of smoking while he played. He used the instrument constantly for several years, and, because of how worn it became, he eventually purchases another Torres guitar to replace it. After Tárrega's death, the instrument was sold to a wealthy family in Argentina and given to a ten-year-old girl. Pujol came across the guitar fairly late, and by that point it had been abused—pieces broken, the machine heads replaced by cheaper ones, and a number of pieces of the rosette missing. The guitar sold at auction for $157,000 in 2007.

SE 99: This instrument has a spruce soundboard and three-piece cypress back and sides. It is a wonderful instrument in and of itself, but perhaps most noteworthy for its backstory.

Decades ago, when virtuoso guitarist Celedonio Romero was touring in Spain, he would stop by the Madrid guitar shop of his good friend Santos Hernandez. The relationship between the two was a long-standing one—a Spaniard himself, Celedonio had attended school in Madrid and gave his first public recital there. When the guitarist would visit the shop, the two would often spend the afternoon together, each continuing with his work—Romero writing or arranging compositions and Hernandez building or repairing instruments. Periodically, Celedonio's effort would hit a dead end, and he would crumple up a used sheet of notation paper and toss it in the trash. Hernandez would later retrieve the paper to use in his guitar repairs—it was common practice to use paper as reinforcing strips when gluing joints together. Torres himself had used paper for joints on at least six of his guitars.

Years passed, and in 1943, Santos Hernandez died. In the late '50s, Celedonio moved to California and became the patriarch of a world-renowned family of guitarists (Los Romeros) and also collected instruments. Fast-forward decades to 1996, to find Celedonio, now 83, in a hospital bed,

fitted with an oxygen mask. He was dying of lung cancer. One day, his son Pepe came to visit him and mentioned that a Torres guitar had become available for purchase. The old man raised up, removed the oxygen mask, and said, "*Cómprala*!" ("Buy it!"), and then lay back down and replaced the oxygen mask. His son replied, "But it is expensive, Father." The old man raised up again, pulled off the mask once more and said, in Spanish, "Sell a Fleta!" "Father," said Pepe, "It is *very* expensive." The old man raised himself up a third time, removed the mask and said, "Sell *two* Fletas!"

Pepe called the owner of the Torres from the hospital that same day, and shortly after, he sold the two Fleta guitars to pay for the guitar that was built in 1886. When the new acquisition arrived, Pepe made an interesting discovery: Placed inside SE 99, where a guitarist could easily view it through the soundhole as he played, was a small clipping of paper. Celedonio's used notation paper had been re-purposed by Santos Hernandez all those years before, to repair the instrument! Pepe had heard stories from his father about how he spent hours in his friend's shop, and he knew immediately what he was looking at. The Romero family still owns this instrument.

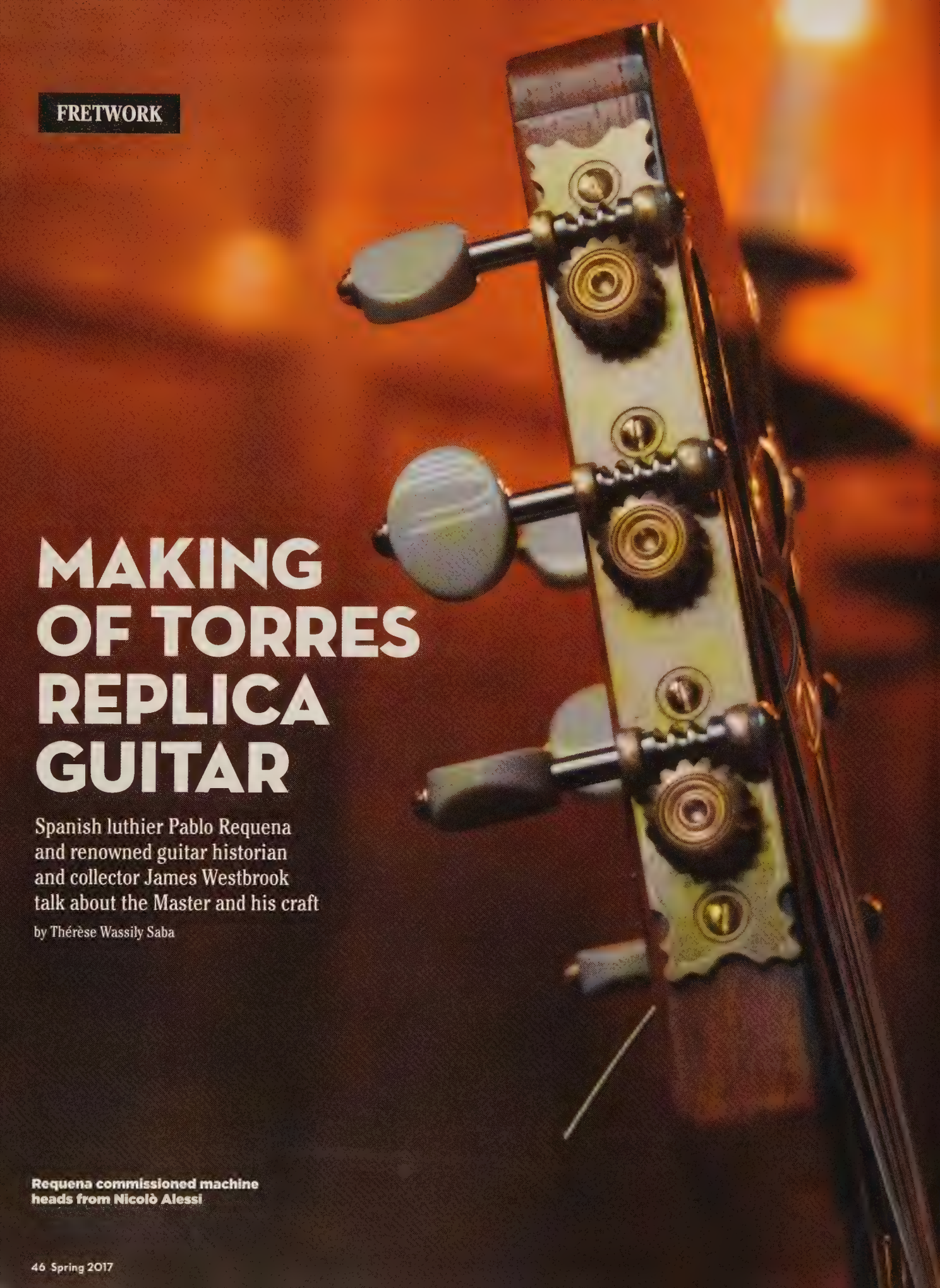
SE 114: This was the last guitar owned by Francisco Tárrega, and, according to his widow, his favorite. She sold it in 1920 for 5,000 pesetas. Made in 1888, this guitar has a two-piece European spruce soundboard and Brazilian rosewood back and sides. Tárrega was perhaps the most important person in the spread of the Torres school of guitar-making, for, as a teacher, he promoted an improved style of playing, along with more comfortable posture, all based on this type of instrument. Unfortunately, he was also a heavy smoker, and, as with FE 17, this instrument bears several burn marks from his cigarettes. Nonetheless, the guitar's owner, Sheldon Urlik, states that, "Talented guitarists have played SE 114 and have commented that the sound is warm, balanced, melodic, and calm." And in a previous story in *Classical Guitar* (Summer 2016), he noted, "That great guitar can really transport you... One virtuoso player was here and he started playing pieces by Tárrega on it and he kept commenting, 'At last, I know how to play Tárrega!' It's really something special... To me, that is the most collectible, precious guitar there is." —*KB*

PHOTO COURTESY OF GUITAR SALON INTERNATIONAL

Wulfin Lieske playing 'La Leona' (FE 04)

STEFAN SOBELL PHOTO

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTIE'S



MAKING OF TORRES REPLICA GUITAR

Spanish luthier Pablo Requena and renowned guitar historian and collector James Westbrook talk about the Master and his craft

by Thérèse Wassily Saba

Requena commissioned machine heads from Nicolò Alessi

THÉRÈSE WASSILY SABA PHOTO

The Spanish guitar maker Pablo Requena recently completed a Torres copy, which he had on display at the International Classical Guitar Festival in West Dean, England, August 2016. By good fortune, James Westbrook of The Guitar Museum in Brighton was present at the time, so we could have a discussion about building Torres replicas from two expert perspectives: That of a luthier and that of someone who has dedicated his life to in-depth research into historical instruments. Requena's Torres replica is a copy of an instrument in Westbrook's collection. Westbrook also built a copy of the same instrument, with its 64 cm scale length and maple construction.

Why build a Torres replica? "My guitars are based on the Torres design and I have been building them like this for about 20 years," Requena says. "I am very inspired by the work of both Torres and of Hermann Hauser; my own guitars have been based on their guitars."

Requena is originally from Malaga, Spain, but in recent years has been living in Lewes, in southern England. In fact, his guitar-building started after he moved to England. "The idea of building this Torres replica," he continues, "is because every time I saw Jim Westbrook's Torres, I was in love with it. It is not only a beautiful instrument to look at, but also as soon as you play it, it has a kind of sweetness and character that you don't find in other guitars."

Westbrook has owned the Torres for many years. "It was made in 1864," he notes. "I bought it from a friend in Norway—Erik Stenstadvold—when I was writing my masters [thesis] on Torres. I already had one Torres, and you only really learn by having these instruments, seeing them, and playing them. In my time, I have owned over a thousand 19th-century guitars, though obviously not a thousand Torres guitars—most people are lucky to have just one."

Of course, you might expect that someone with a "guitar museum" would have an extensive range and number of instruments, but the one thousand figure is still staggering. Requena mentions to Westbrook, "At one point, you owned four Torres guitars, didn't you?" "Yes," says James, "on this project, I wanted to have a lot of exposure to Torres. I also wrote to people who owned a Torres and explained my aims in the [master's] project—that I wanted to see as many Torres guitars as I could. I also wanted to buy as many as I could. I sold most of my collection, which appeared in *The Century That Shaped the Guitar* [book] and with the money bought four Torres guitars. Then I wrote my master's thesis based on those four guitars."

Westbrook has built three Torres replica guitars, so I ask him if he wants to modify his earlier statement of "You only know Torres by owning one" to "You only know Torres by *building* one?"

"I originally wanted to make guitars when I was doing valuations for Bonhams [auction house]," he explains. "I was sometimes valuing 19th century guitars without labels, so I wanted to get closer to the work and the craftsmanship—to know whether a guitar was good quality just by looking at it. Through making guitars for my research, I definitely learned so many more distinguishing things that someone who doesn't make guitars probably wouldn't spot."

Pablo Requena (holding his Torres replica) and James Westbrook

THÉRÈSE WASSILY SABA PHOTO

Westbrook won the Terence Pamplin Award for Organology—an award that encourages researching the science and history of acoustic instruments—from England's Worshipful Company of Musicians, which provided him with a small grant to make a copy of a guitar. "I am in the process of making a copy of a guitar by Roudhloff. I have had the luck to be restoring one at the same time as making the copy. I've learned so much about their philosophy of making, as well as the construction."

Requena adds, "A bit like Jim, I felt that as I loved Torres' work, it would be a great opportunity to understand his work even more. But also, having Jim so near, I felt that it was an opportunity that I didn't want to miss out on. There are so many plans available for building a Torres, but sometimes when you examine them, you think, 'Well, that doesn't look right.'" Westbrook agrees: "Sometimes, there's not enough information on them." Requena continues, "Jim was very kind to allow me to come and see his Torres. He also has so much information that he has shared with me, as well. This guitar is the result and I am really pleased with it. My hope is that people will like it and that they will start commissioning me to build one for them."

I asked Westbrook whether he stayed strictly with the Torres construction when he was building his replica. "No, I'm not sure whether I set out to do that. I mean, it *is* as close a copy as you will get. The thing about Torres guitars is that most people talk about thicknesses of the wood. But, I like to use the word 'thinness'—I think a lot of people might be scared to come down to those levels of thinness."

"In the original," Requena chimes in, "the sides were about 1 mm thick, so in this guitar I have done the same, but with this wood in particular, in a couple of places, I could see that it was just too fragile, so I put a little reinforcement down there." Westbrook adds, "That is something that Torres

did. Torres puts these little spokes on both sides, because the sides are so thin. I have seen some copies of Torres, which haven't put them on, and they crack."

Requena: "For the soundboard, the thickness varies between 1.4 mm, 1.5 mm, 1.6 mm, even 1.3 mm. The back, like the original, varies a lot as well, but it's about 2.3 mm, 2.4 mm, 2.5 mm, so it's a bit thicker in comparison to the rest of the instrument. But to try to get the spirit of the Torres, each piece of wood is a bit different, the grain, the amount of lines—all those things determine the result, so if I did it exactly as Torres did, maybe it would work or maybe it wouldn't; you have to use your experience as a maker to decide what would be suitable."

Westbrook compared his approach: "It's much more difficult for me because I haven't got the experience. I make one guitar a year. For me, that means that every time feels like the first time, because I forget. Pablo is doing it every day, so he has the experience. I know you shouldn't copy plans—for example, there's no good in looking at the thicknesses of Friedrich's guitars and copying them, because your piece of wood is different, so you have to allow for that. I haven't got the experience, so I have to rely on friends—particularly, David Whiteman helps me with that sort of thing—the flexing of the wood, when it is right."

So far, player response to Requena's instrument has been overwhelmingly favorable. "The first thing they say is that the sound is so big," the luthier notes, "because the instrument itself is quite small, so you have an expectation of a tiny sound and one that is perhaps not as full. But when you play it, you can see that you could play a full concert on the instrument. The volume is almost the same as a modern classical guitar. In fact, Jim's Torres has been used in many concerts over the years—John Mills has played it in his concerts—and these instruments were built to be played by professionals. So in terms of the tone, yes, it is completely different, in the same way that all guitars are quite individual; they all have their own character."

The machine heads on Requena's replica are beautiful, as is the wooden case he built himself. Though Westbrook says that he has consistently found useable original hardware for his replicas, Requena wasn't so lucky, stating, "I never find them when I need them, so I had to commission them. They were made by Nicolò Alessi. The barrels are 31 mm distance, instead of 35 mm [on the original Torres] and he had to make them thinner as well, so that I could keep the original dimensions."

Requena also teaches guitar construction and organizes four-week courses in Spain twice a year, which include all the materials required to build a master-grade classical guitar students can take home with them.

Meanwhile, Westbrook is continuing his research into guitars, working on his Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge on *Panormo and Guitar-Making in 19th Century London.* However, his current project for his fellowship is on the guitars of David Rubio. His master's thesis on Torres remains unpublished, but hopefully we will see it in the future.

For info about Pablo Requena's guitar-making course, go to guitarmakingcourse.org. His own guitars can be viewed at spanishguitar.org.uk. James Westbrook's The Guitar Museum is dedicated to the Guitar of the 19th Century (actually from 1785–1909), theguitarmuseum.com

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PRELUDE TO 'LA CATEDRAL'

Mastering Barrios' arpeggios and more

by Rhayn Jooste

BY AUGUSTÍN BARRIOS (1885–1944) is a programmatic piece that instantly captures the imagination of most who hear it, and as such sits at or near the pinnacle of pieces that classical guitarists yearn to play. Although it was originally composed in 1921, when the Paraguayan guitarist/composer fell ill while touring western Uruguay, the piece's famous opening Prelude in B minor was added 18 years later, debuting in concert at the National Theatre in San Salvador, El Salvador, in July 1939; thus completing the master work we know today. This first movement is distinctive, evocative, and blissfully stands on its own as a concert piece. This lesson will explore its modern arpeggios, left-hand-independence, melody and accompaniment, and the *campanella* effect.

OVERVIEW

Agustín Barrios has become regarded as perhaps the leading modern Romantic composer for the guitar. A polymath who some believe never fully realized his potential, Barrios died in relative poverty, largely unknown outside of Latin America. The Prelude to *La Catedral*, composed in 1938 and only added to the second and third movements a year and a half later, was written while Barrios was visiting Cuba. Not concertizing as much as he wanted and beset by financial woes, he was clearly in a reflective mood, as the piece carries the subtitle "*Saudade*." This Portuguese word sometimes carries a melancholic shading and cannot be exactly translated into English, but the closest we can get is "reminisce." There is currently only one known source for this prelude, a hand-written manuscript from the archives of the Paraguayan guitarist Caya Sila Godoy (1919–2014). Unlike the second and third movements of *La Catedral,* which have some divergence between autograph scores, there are no textual discrepancies on what Barrios composed in the prelude.

RIGHT HAND

This opening piece is based on four right-hand arpeggio patterns which fully exploit the guitar's strings and resonance, and is accomplished with a subtle *campanella* effect (see below). Barrios had a profound understanding of how harmony could be utilized on the unique landscape that is the fretboard, and he wrote music for the guitar, not guitar music. This reason alone makes it a challenging piece, added to which is its distinct melody. **Micro Study 1** presents the main pattern, in Barrios' original written two-voice format, in a simple harmonic structure to practice this very thing—clear voices. Once you have a handle on the first four bars, this pattern is transposed up an octave, thus posing a greater challenge for the LH and getting closer to the original. Here the fingers will need to accommodate the open strings with a slightly higher arch to their curve and the finger tip pointing directly into the fretboard. There should only be a slight increase in pressure on the fretted notes. If you find you are pressing down too much, have a closer look at your guitar action, which has a direct bearing on how easy this is to play and will cause LH distortion if too high. A fine sense of tonal balance, between fretted and open strings is essential as the open strings tend to overpower the delicate high fretted notes; along with an ability to separate the melody from the accompaniment. (See *CG* Winter 2016 for more advice on achieving this.)

MICRO STUDY 1

Lento

a m i p i m a m a m i p i m a m a m i p i m a m a m i p i m a m

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To watch video demonstrations of each of the micro studies, go to classicalguitarmagazine.com/method.

Micro Study 2 advances the arpeggio practice, also with simplified harmony, this time to rehearse the four main arpeggio patterns. Practice each pattern until secure, and then place them all together to form one large sequence. Barrios uses an open string in pattern 1 (the root of the key); then all fretted notes in pattern 2; two open strings in pattern 3; and finally pattern 4 (technically two patterns) being the first cell of pattern 1 repeated. Pattern 4 is important; it is used to double the harmonic rate and excitement of the piece, to culminate in the coda, which then introduces new musical material. Barrios' compositional genius lies in the variation he is able to further achieve with these arpeggios by shifting where the open strings are placed within each chord. Once you have an understanding of the basic patterns take a closer look at the full original score to fully appreciate the subtle variants to each one. This close analysis will also help cement the piece, its structure, and harmony into memory.

LEFT HAND

The prelude is in binary form (A B), with a coda, where Barrios utilizes B minor at length across the fretboard. The main idea, bars 1–4, are extended and re-harmonized in section A, and developed in section B. One of the challenges for the LH in this piece is to lift fingers out of chord shapes to use again while still playing. **Micro Study 3** addresses this by isolating a demanding set of changes to play cleanly—bars 8 to 12—and relocating these chords into the middle of the fretboard for ease of practice. The fingers that need to be infinitesimally released ahead of time have been clearly marked and sequenced with arrows; note the fingering suggestion, no barre, in bar 2 of the micro study (bar 9 of the original). If you have never tried moving left-hand fingers independently while playing with the RH, go slow. Deliberate and purposeful practice is what is required here. This truly is one of those woodshed moments that necessitates patience, so perfect it one bar at a time. Once you can play it at position VII, put it back up to position X. You will then only need to get comfortable accommodating the fingers against the guitar body and the smaller fret spacing. To achieve this, pivot the LH elbow to ease the changes.

CAMPANELLA

The coda further exploits the *campanella* (little bell) effect—notes ringing over each other as pealing bells do—which pervades this piece. To achieve this, Barrios used high fretted notes alongside open strings. This is a very efficient technique for scales and arpeggios whose keys allow the open strings to be exploited, in this case: D major = open D, B, G, and E strings. **Micro Study 4** employs the B minor scale up the fretboard, in *campanella*, and proposes a popular alternate fingering back down through Barrios' original idea at bar 45.

SHIFTING

There is a fair amount of shifting in this piece and it is generally executed with the little finger as it traces the melody down the fretboard. The little finger is easily strained, so apply pressure gently and do not push past any pain. Barrios begins on fret 14 and slowly winds the melody down the frets, generally a bar at a time, with a brief pause on an open E at bar 33, to finally finish up on the leading tone A sharp (string 3) at bar 42. These melodic notes need to be executed with legato shifting, so no big gaps. To achieve this, lead all chord changes with the finger on the melody. A top tip, stolen from watching John Williams play live, is to use very subtle violin slides into any shift that has a gap bigger that two or three frets, thus joining up the bars and creating smooth phrases. This melodic line will also need to be supported by vibrato—a lot of vibrato—so loosen the chosen LH finger in the socket, and match the rhythm of the vibrato to your tempo.

HARMONICS

The prelude finishes with a series of natural harmonics in broken and frozen chord form. Two great tips for getting clear sounding harmonics: First make sure your RH fingertip is exactly over the fret wire of choice for the broken chord run; secondly when playing the frozen chord harmonics, move your RH back toward the bridge, allowing the string more room to vibrate and thus achieving a clearer tone. Note that the run can also be played artificially by leaving the B minor barre down.

EDITIONS

Interestingly, there is a discrepancy between the recorded versions of this piece and the last written harmonic at bar 47. Barrios' clearly has it placed at the 12th fret in his autograph score, whereas modern players continue on at the 19th fret, the difference between the tonic and the dominant degree the of B minor scale. This error has possibly been allowed to proliferate due to the early printed (Faber Music) version of 1979 having all the harmonics at the 19th fret, whereas Rico Stover's updated authoritative Mel Bay version of 2003 is accurate with the original score. So check your editions and be aware of any editorial changes that distort Barrios' ideas or fingerings. This issue also raises the question: Why have modern editors insisted on setting this prelude in 2 or 3 voices? Barrios was more than capable of notating that himself (see *Julia Florida*) and yet chose not to. Is it possible he was trying to achieve another sonority? Or did he feel that the implied polyphony was self-evident? If so, was this a further, visual, reference to Bach and the second movement?

Modern players also tend to follow Barrios' fingering in bar 27 adding in an E on string 3, not what he actually notated: an F♯.

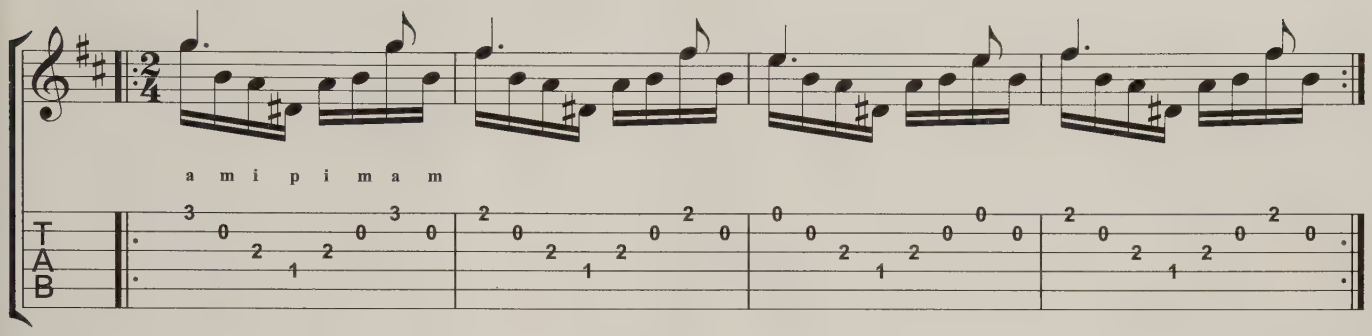
FINAL REFLECTION

Barrios made sure that whoever played this piece after him would understand its programmatic nature, and by extension the whole of *La Catedral*. Each one of its movements has a specified subtitle along with a main mode of expression, thus unifying the three pieces. In this case, the Prelude, subtitled, as mentioned earlier, *Saudade*, lists its main expression as *ben marcato il canto* (a well-marked singing line). These two very simple directions are really all you need to get into the character of this piece. Dr. Rico Stover, in his definitive book on Barrios, *Six Silver Moonbeams*, points out that this prelude also has an "improvised quality" to it. This final suggestion will facilitate any performance of it, as traditionally preludes were used by musicians as a warm-up for hands, to "get" into key, and almost always improvised. In this case, Barrios supplied a superlative opening to one of his seminal works. **CG**

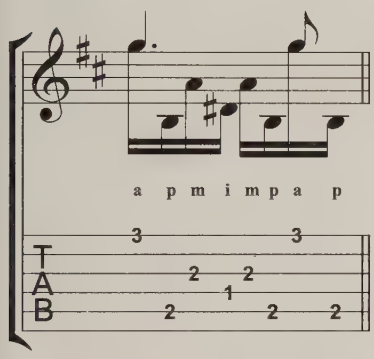
MICRO STUDY 2

Use the melody to play through patterns 2 & 3

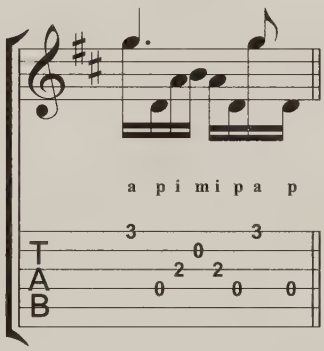
Pattern: 1



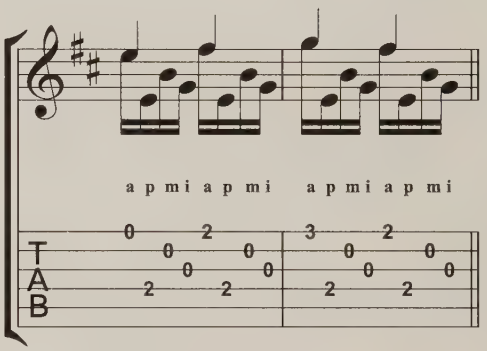
Pattern: 2



Pattern: 3



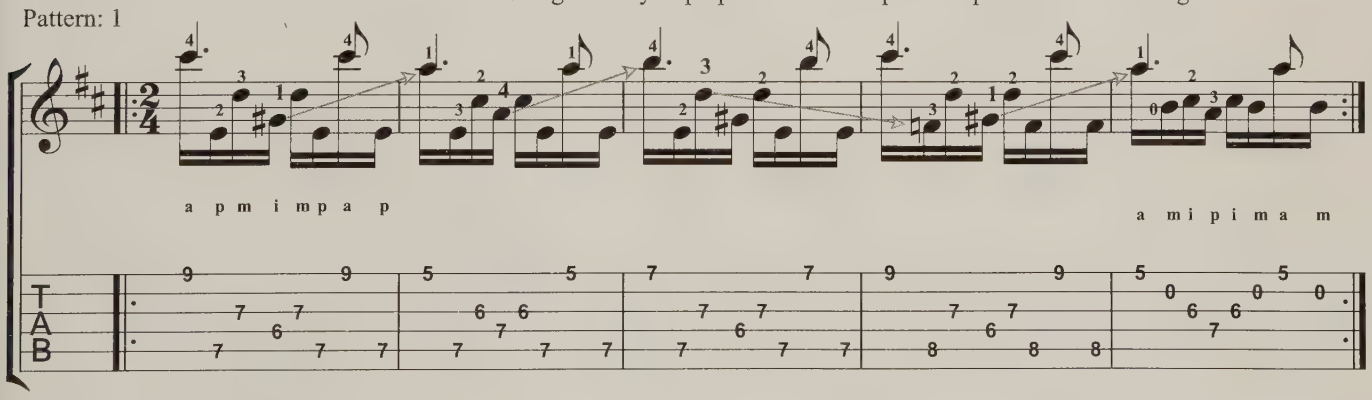
Pattern: 4



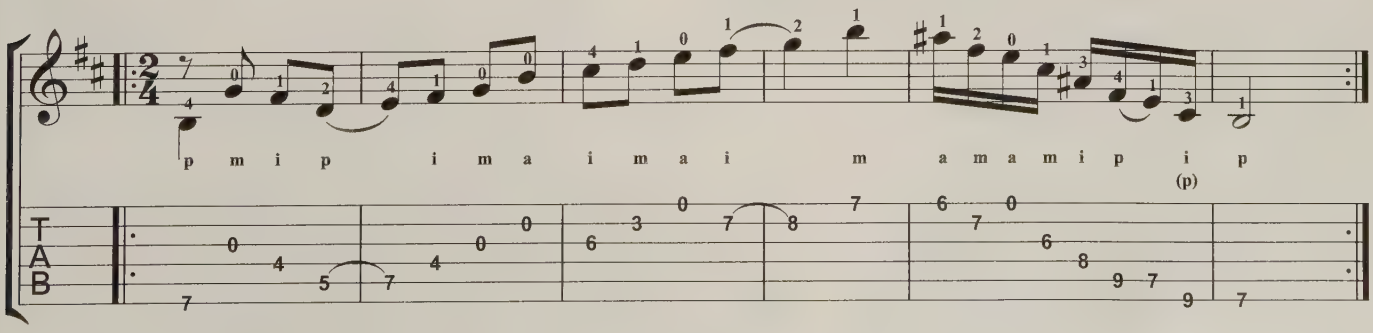
MICRO STUDY 3

Release underlined fingers early to prepare and where possible place ahead of change.

Pattern: 1



MICRO STUDY 4



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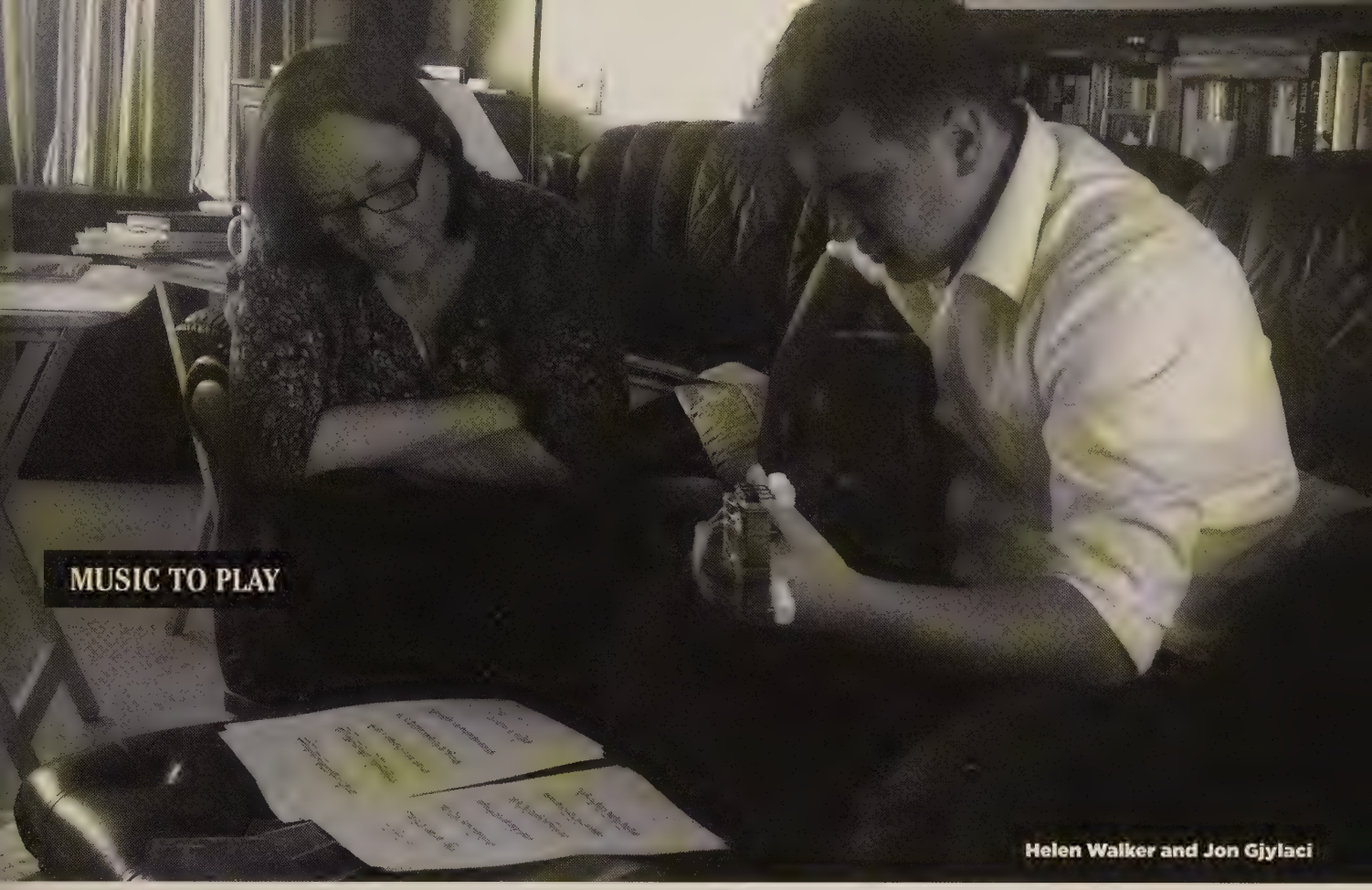


Helen Walker and Jon Gjylaci

'DIVERTISSEMENT NO. 3 FOR GUITAR'

BY HELEN WALKER

We asked British musician Helen Walker to fill us in a bit on this piece and her career.

I wrote *Five Divertissements for Guitar* at the invitation of Paul Fowles of the Manchester Guitar Circle. His encouragement and advice, alongside that of classical guitarist Jon Gjylaci [see page 14], who premiered the work at the Bolton School Arts Centre, Bolton, England, on June 17, 2015, led me to gratefully dedicate it them.

The work was my introduction to composing for solo classical guitar and was primarily inspired by my love of the instrument. However, not having actually owned a classical guitar for 40-plus years, I purchased a neglected secondhand, 3/4–sized instrument that I restored and used to write the pieces on when I came to compose the *Divertissements*. The guitar has a lovely tone and it was ideal for me to refer to during the process. It cost $10, then I renovated it and it's now it's probably worth $11!

I wanted the pieces, although miniature, to be complete journeys in their own right, as well as parts of the whole. They were written to be accessible to students of the guitar and to be an enjoyable experience for the player as much as for the audience.

After the pieces were complete, I asked Paul Fowles and Jon Gjylaci to run their eyes over them for anything that may be unplayable, and then Jon added his fingerings during the rehearsal period leading up to the premiere. I originally met Jon through my husband Mike, who sometimes plays percussion with him in concert. Mike also plays on a couple of tracks—*Asturias* and *Danza Brasilera*—on Jon's latest CD release, *Edges of Thought*. Jon and Mike opened for Xuefei Yang at the Manchester Guitar Circle's 70th anniversary concert.

Though they are the first pieces that I've written for classical guitar, I've been a composer and songwriter for over 30 years. I've composed, across genres, for concert, film, television, record releases, ballet, and the stage. I had a few guitar lessons when I was very young, but the instruments I play professionally are piano, organ, and other keyboards. In the songs I write and record with my husband Mike, as the Nearlys, I play electric guitar and bass on some of the tracks, but I wouldn't dare describe myself as a guitarist—I dabble!

Still, I hope to write more pieces for classical guitar in the near future—maybe longer works—and also collaborate with Jon again.

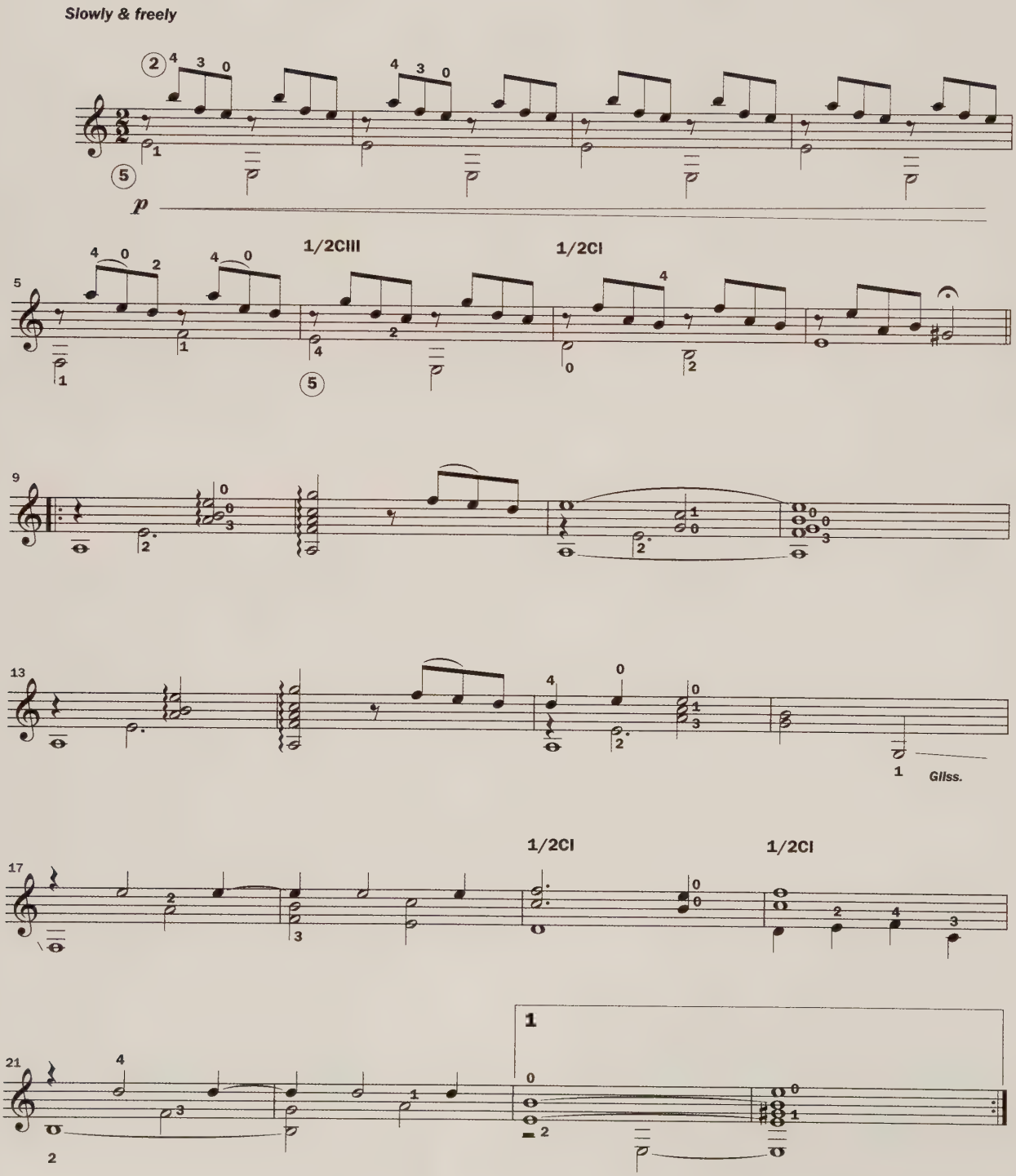
To hear *Divertissement No. 3* (as well as the other four), go to everydayrecords.com/guitar.html. Music for the other Divertissements can be purchased through helenwalker.musicaneo.com.

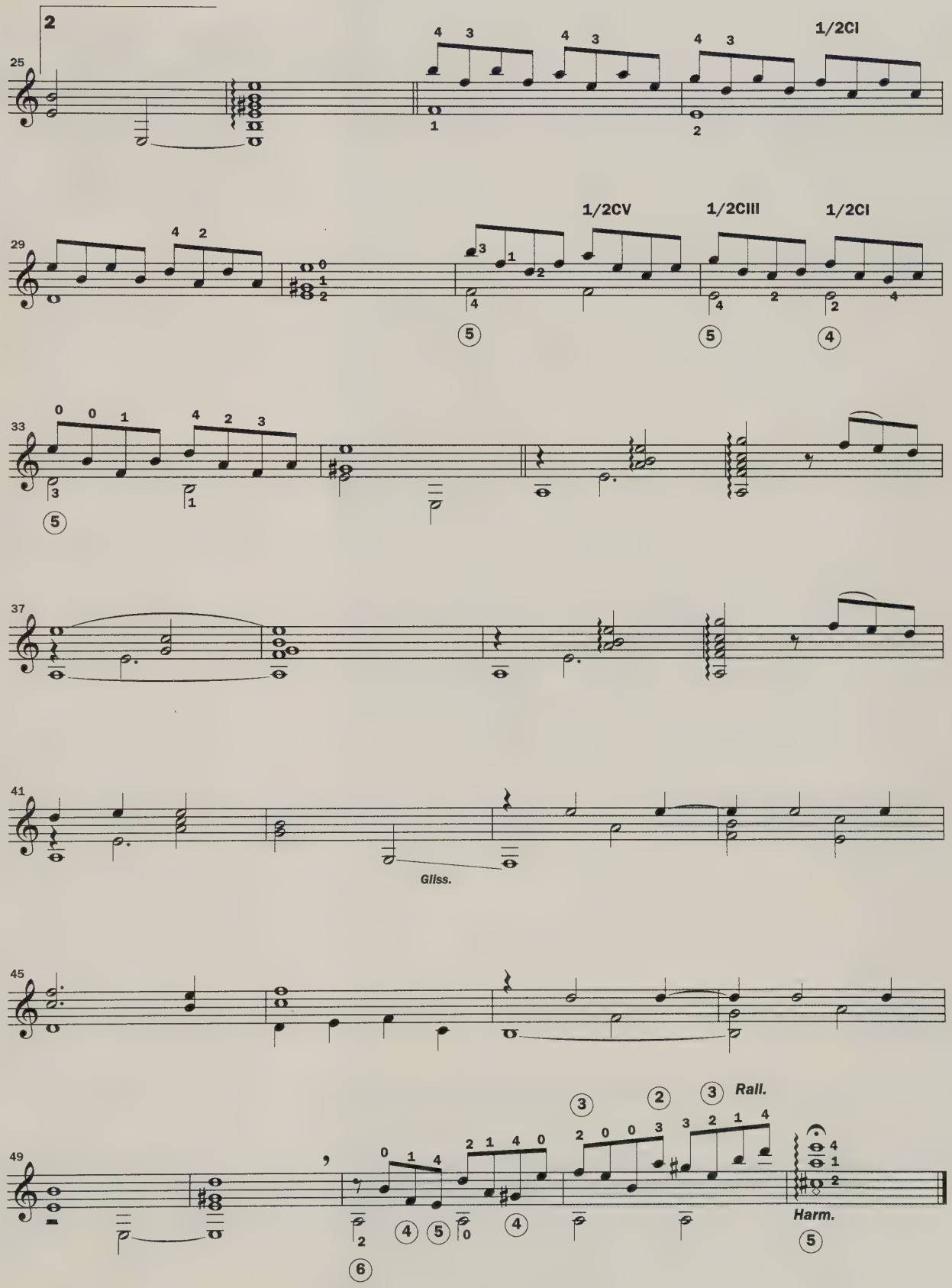
Guidelines for submitting pieces for "Music to Play" can be found at classicalguitarmagazine.com/musictoplay.

MIKE WALKER PHOTO

DIVERTISSEMENT NO. 3 FOR GUITAR

For Jon Gjylaci, Paul Fowles & the Manchester Guitar Circle
by Helen Walker





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Juan Gris' *Guitar on a Table*, 1915

HOW TO EXPERIENCE MUSIC ON A DEEPER LEVEL

Three steps to becoming a more sensitive and focused player

by Andy Whitehead

You can experience music on a deeper level, whether you're a beginner playing for fun or an experienced professional. Doing so will more meaningfully affect you and your listeners. I suggest you try three things: narrow your musical interests, memorize your music deeply, and enhance your musical feelings.

NARROW YOUR MUSICAL INTERESTS

Limit yourself to experiencing the music that resonates with you the most. Of course, there are times, maybe for a certain performance, when we need to learn songs that we don't feel very strongly about. But when you have the choice of what songs to practice, I suggest playing exclusively only the music that seriously strikes your heart.

To find such songs, take note of when you had a meaningful listening experience or performance. That's a connection with music that you can repeat and allow to grow. Listen or play that song/piece or composer repeatedly. Absorb the message and intention of the piece. Then, try to write your own piece based off the ideas in that song.

Also, try to immerse yourself in other forms of art that have similar feelings or concepts. Find a movie or painting that has a similar mood to the piece you've been playing and listening to. Be true to yourself and persistent in following your interests. One favorite song or piece should lead to another, which should lead to another. At this rate, you'll find your strong feelings transferring to new pieces, composers, and genres you didn't previously have an interest in. Your overall emotional experience with music will be enriched.

MEMORIZE DEEPLY

Memorize your pieces on a deeper level. This allows you to be more connected to the emotion of the music. One worn-out way to memorize a piece is called "associative chaining." This is where you memorize the first section and the transition into the second. Then, from that second section you memorize the transition into the next, and so on. The biggest problem with this method is that if you draw a blank in the middle of a piece, to remember what comes next, you have to repeat a previous section or start from the beginning. Since this is definitely not ideal in a performance setting, it's helpful to use additional strategies that will draw more details out of the music to use as references.

Try dividing a piece into different sections. Then, specifically describe what you are attempting to achieve from each section. Write on your sheet music detailed performance notes, such as the intended feel, dynamics, notes, articulations, phrasing, chord analysis, etc. The more details you take note of, the more points of reference you'll have that will anchor you to each section. You'll have more than just the order of notes to remember. The other benefit of this method is that your performance will be full of dynamics, expression, and other rich details. You'll be playing better overall music. But, the first step is to write these details down. If you can't put into words what you're trying to achieve, you'll simply be performing a vague idea of what you think you want.

For an example, let's look at how you could define sections and describe the beginning of *Gran Vals* by Francisco Tárrega. You could break the piece into five main sections and label the sections accordingly: ABBCCDDA. These sections are clearly defined because they are in mostly different keys and are also repeated. In the first A section, you could write down performance notes in the sheet music such as: waltz, key of A major, presto, expressive, crescendo, repeated rhythm, and draw a circle around the ritard. These are just a few performance details to write in the music. You want to write notes in a way that makes sense to you. Customize these notes to describe exactly what you want to strive for in your performance.

Now that you have distinct sections defined and full of rich details, play those sections in order by first looking at the music. When you look at the music, be sure to incorporate your performance notes in your playing. Then, without looking at the music, play the sections in order again, while still retaining your performance notes in your playing.

Next, look at the music again, and this time play the sections in a random order. Let's take *Gran Vals* as an example again. You could start by playing the last A section, followed by the B section, then the D section, and lastly the C section. This allows you to practice each section at least once. Again, still be mindful of incorporating your performance notes. Now, for your final challenge, without looking at the music, play the sections in a random order. Although, this will prove to be difficult, you'll develop an equally strong connection with each section.

> "IT'S MORE VALUABLE TO YOU AND YOUR LISTENERS THAT YOU PERFORM WITH YOUR OWN VOICE RATHER THAN REPLICATING SOMEONE ELSE'S."

ENHANCE YOUR MUSICAL FEELINGS

How can you sharpen your emotional senses to feel more from music? As previously described, I think the first step is to listen and practice a favorite piece extensively. But after this initial step, how do you focus on the feeling of a piece while struggling with new techniques and wrestling with anxious performance thoughts?

When you're developing a new technique, understand that you won't play it exactly like the composer or previous performers. Every player will draw from their unique experience and personality to form their interpretation of the same piece. Anyway, it's more valuable to you and your listeners that you perform with your own voice rather than replicating someone else's. You are capable of this, too. You can interpret the feeling and message of music as well as anybody. So, when you're practicing a technique, naturally let your feelings be expressed in your execution.

It's when you honestly express your feelings that you're sure to move the listener, even during the more difficult technique passages. People will temporarily react to technique and an athletic way of playing music. But the most enduring effect on an audience will be when you experience what truly resonates with you and then transfer that experience to the audience. It's ultimately more important to be touched by music than to be impressed with it.

Now, what if while you're performing, your mind wanders away from the music's feeling to negative thoughts? Such thoughts could include your lack of practice, excessive focus on technique, general thoughts about yourself, or worrying about the audience's approval of you.

What you need to do is remind yourself of the bigger picture of what you are doing. Consider how privileged you are to listen, enjoy, and perform songs that deeply move you. On top of that, consider how fortunate your role is of interpreting this beauty for others to be touched by. Think about music as a gift that must be shared. You are enjoying and delivering this beautiful gift. But *you* have to be in love with the beauty of this act before the audience will be. Appreciating the positive impact music has on you and your listeners can help put into proportion how insignificant your fears and performance anxiety are. It helps you to see that performing music is ultimately about creation, not destruction—belief in beauty, not doubt in your ability. This bigger picture gives you a more valuable reason for playing music than just for yourself. Performance becomes the grounds for real change to first take place in yourself, and inevitably in your listeners.

If you maintain this kind of mindset in a performance, you will allow yourself to stay focused on the emotion and feeling of the music. And as you do this, you'll open yourself up to receive the beauty that music has to offer you. As Andrés Segovia said, "the poetry of the music should resound in your heart." **CG**

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FOR MUSICIANS & MUSIC LOVERS

INJURIES. RECOVERY. GUITAR.

FROM THE DREADED FOCAL DYSTONIA TO INFECTED FINGERNAILS, GUITARISTS HAVE MANY HEALTH CONCERNS THAT CAN AFFECT THEIR PLAYING AND THEIR LIVELIHOOD

I originally conceived of this Special Focus on Guitar Injuries and Recovery over a year ago.

Word had just come down that Miloš Karadaglic suddenly cancelled a long tour in support of *Blackbird*, his new album of imaginative interpretations of Beatles songs, due to what was vaguely termed a "thumb injury." Did he close it in a door? Was it hurt in a fall? Or was it something more serious—such as a repetitive stress injury (RSI), so common among musicians (and people who work at computers all day, and lots of other folks)?

Regardless of the cause, it got me thinking about what a nightmare it is for anyone whose livelihood—not to mention their greatest passion—is taken away for a few days, weeks, months, years... *forever*. The range is so wide because the calamities that can befall guitarists are so varied. Whether it's a concert or a recording date or a teaching session, any cancelled gig is serious business. Beyond the financial toll injuries can and do take, there's also an emotional and psychological component—the doubt and uncertainty that accompanies *any* health issue, whether it's the flu or a broken leg. When will I feel normal again? Why isn't this treatment working better and faster? Will I regain all the skills I had before my injury? What will I do if I can't play at my highest level? These are all natural questions. It's tremendously difficult *not* to go down some dark mental hallways in such situations.

With Miloš, it was just a few months later that we were heartened to learn that he was booking dates for the fall of 2016; apparently, the mystery thumb issue had been successfully treated. With this Special Focus story already in the deep planning stages last summer, I approached Miloš' representative about possibly doing an interview with him about the injury and recovery—a feel-good story about a truly nice guy. My request was politely turned down, and I understood completely: He probably did not want to shine a light on the malady that had forced him to cancel his tour, and possibly jeopardize future bookings from skittish concert producers.

But shortly after that, a more ominous announcement came from the guitarist himself: "It saddens me deeply to need to write these lines. Performing is all I live for. There is nothing I love more than being on stage and sharing the gift of music. In two weeks' time I was about to embark on the most exciting tour of my career. I've spent all these months preparing for it—just giving it my absolute best. And yet, despite all that, no matter how hard I tried, the physical condition I was suffering from in 2015 has most unfortunately returned.

"My doctors have been very clear with me now—the kind of movement disorder I have is complex and uncompromising and it cannot resolve itself within a few weeks or months. Hence, I've been unanimously advised to withdraw from all concert engagements for at least this whole season and break the vicious cycle I have found myself in. It is so incredibly hard for me to accept this, but sadly, I have no other choice but to comply."

Our hearts go out to Miloš, and we wish him well on his journey back to health and the concert stage. But his tale reinforces something that became quite apparent when I started digging around looking for stories about health issues related to playing guitar—nearly every guitarist has encountered some episode or malady at some point, and the lucky ones who haven't know someone who has. Many are in denial, searching desperately for clues and remedies. Others know the truth but choose not to share it with others.

This article will not solve anyone's problems. What you'll find here are some stories from guitarists who have dealt with everything from musician's focal dystonia—surprisingly common and perhaps the most feared of all performance-affecting afflictions—to broken arms and infected nails. The piece is bookended by lengthy testimonials from David Leisner and Liona Boyd about their battles with FD, and in between are nuggets (both current and from archival *CG* interviews) with the likes of Julian Bream, Irina Kulikova, Leo Brouwer, and some less-known guitarists. We hope you'll come away from this a little more informed. At the very least you'll know that whatever you're going through, you're not alone, but by all means reach out for help as soon as you can! And, as always, we welcome your stories and feedback on this issue.

—Blair Jackson

DAVID LEISNER
A RARE VICTORY OVER FOCAL DYSTONIA

"I've become a sort of poster child for focal dystonia," the eminent New York-based guitarist, composer, and teacher David Leisner mentioned in an email early on in our correspondence about this article. Indeed, though an untold number of classical guitarists—including many who preceded him—have been afflicted, sometimes unknowingly, with FD, Leisner was one of the first to publicly speak out about his battle—and he is also one of the few who seems to have fully beaten this crippling condition that kept him off concert stages for 12 years (1984–1996). The proof is in the playing: In the past couple of years alone, Leisner has kept a busy schedule of solo and chamber concerts, master classes, and released a critically acclaimed CD called Facts of Life, *and another with cellist Zuill Bailey,* Arpeggione, *all the while teaching at the Manhattan School of Music and writing musical pieces for guitar and also various chamber configurations.*

The first part of the narrative below was edited from an interview Leisner did with Classical Guitar *editor Colin Cooper (1926–2012) in late 1996, when he was just on the other side of his troubles with focal dystonia. It originally appeared in the June 1997 issue of* CG. *Then, last fall (2016), I asked Lesner if he would update his story, to fill us in a bit on the two decades since his remarkable recovery.*

In 1984, I had the beginnings of a hand condition, now known as focal dystonia. It is the same condition that the [classical] pianists Leon Fleischer and Gary Graffman have; they made this condition famous. It's a condition where the fingers—the ring and pinkie in my case—curl into the palm without control and without pain. No pain is the distinguishing factor. You don't know where the problem is. It could be in the hand, it could be in the arm, the shoulder, the back. If you have no pain to pinpoint it, it is very elusive and difficult to fix. And, in fact, no one until now has cured focal dystonia. It is the performance problem that has stumped the performing arts medicine community and the musical community.

When it happened to me, I gradually cancelled concerts one by one, and finally stopped everything. I went to experts, doctors, and alternative specialists of all sorts. I went from one to the other, doing exactly what they told me to do, all telling me they could help me. And each time my hopes were raised and then dashed down to the ground.

I did five years of this. I went to different cities around the country; I spent a good deal of money, time, and psychic energy, and at the end of the five years, I felt like a spent rubber band in every way. The last treatment I underwent, an eclectic Eastern kind of treatment, did me damage. And I thought, "I'm fed up with this, it's not worth it."

I had found out by that time that, in fact, it was well known in the performing arts medicine community that nobody knew how to cure this condition. So I stopped everything. I didn't even try to continue on my own to try to make it better. For a while, I tried playing with mostly two fingers—thumb and index. About a year later, I gravitated intuitively towards the idea of involving the larger muscle groups, in the upper arm and shoulder, in the stroke. Something my colleague at the time, Neil Anderson, said one day made me wonder what would happen if I just swing at the string. I came home that day and started to do that with these large motions that were involving my upper arm.

Within five minutes of doing this, I was able to use my ring finger, which I hadn't used for eight years. Five minutes! Now, you have to understand that until this time I couldn't even place my right hand at the strings without the fingers curling in. At this moment, not only was I able to put my hand at the strings but I was able to actually use the ring finger to pluck the string independently. I knew I was on to something. I proceeded to refine these ideas, and I came to find out—and I'm quite sure of this now—that the focal dystonia place is here, in the armpit, at the apex of where the arm meets the torso.

I started to feel, as I plucked the strings, the contact with the armpit area and also the triceps area in the upper arm. I would think of my hand as a big *nothing*, a big blob attached to my arm by way of a stabilized wrist. And the wrist, being stabilized, made

the arm and the hand move as one piece. And I moved this large lever from the elbow down, from the string up towards my face in this large motion. As I grabbed the string, I would feel the string's tension in those large muscle groups in the armpit. And I would pull it towards me.

Sure enough, within a year I was able to use my middle finger much more, and in another year I was able to use my ring finger in concert, and as of this year [1996] my hand is one hundred per cent. I'm very excited about it, of course, not only for myself but also for other people. There are many, many guitarists and pianists, and a number of bowed string players and other instrumentalists, who have exactly the same problem and do not know how to fix it. I think I have at least the beginnings of a sense of how to fix it.

The basic understanding is very simple, and that is the beauty and probably the rightness of the whole thing. It's an important, far-reaching, and basic understanding of how the arm works. It's something that I teach all my students. None of my students ever have any hand problems, and I want to prevent them from having problems in the future. A very nice additional effect of this whole thing is that one gets a bigger sound and a more beautiful sound with less effort.

This is, in fact, a 20th century problem that has to do with larger concert halls, more pressure to play faster, louder, more often, more difficult repertoire. And what we are beginning to find out is that the technique that instrumentalists in general have developed is not up to those tasks.

So we learn as we go along. People like me have to fall down and pick themselves up again, but maybe to the advancement of the whole thing.

20 YEARS ON

It has been over 20 years since I fully cured myself of focal dystonia. Amazingly, there are people who, for some reason, believe that I still have the dystonia, despite the fact that every symptom of it disappeared completely in the summer of 1996, and that this is what I (truthfully) reported in every public interview and statement since then. Such is the power of the stigma attached to this dreaded condition. It is probably why, to this day, there are a number of well-known guitarists who have the condition and will not discuss it publicly. This is understandable, but unfortunate, given the fact that knowledge of how to cure focal dystonia is still in its early stages. More well-known players emerging into the field of discussion might be very helpful.

Certainly, there has been a lot of progress since 1996. A few people in the medical profession, like Dr. Joaquin Farias and Dr. Nancy Byl, have made substantial contributions to the cure of this condition, as well as a number of practitioners in alternative, non-medical fields like Alexander Technique, physical therapy, music teaching, and so on. I have cured and helped many people from all over the world in private lessons, having refined my understanding of one approach to cure. I have seen people with FD in the various fingers of both the right and left hands, guitarists and other plucked instrumentalists, bowed string players, pianists, woodwind players, and percussionists. Every case is different.

Botox injections, an early source of hope for many, have apparently proved largely unsuccessful in the end, as their positive effect seems to diminish over time. The one time I have seen a significantly positive effect of Botox was with a pianist who worked with me. He had almost reached full cure working with my technique, but wasn't able to achieve 100 percent cure until a couple of Botox injections "reminded" his arms how they worked before. After those injections, he was finally rid of the dystonia.

In my own personal story, it took me a few years to regain my composure onstage. After all, I had the condition for 12 years, a very long time to be out of practice playing in public. Once I had found my confidence again, I began playing at a level unmatched, I believe, by my playing before FD. My ideas about engaging the large muscle groups gave me a deeper understanding of how to play with less effort and greater freedom. This had always been the goal of my technical pursuits on the guitar, but my self-cure led me to an area of knowledge that I hadn't had before. The culmination of all these ideas will be in the book I have recently written called *Playing with Ease: A Healthy Approach to Guitar Technique*, which will be published by Oxford University Press, hopefully in late 2017 or early 2018.

FIVE TIPS TO PREVENT INJURY

Don't be afraid of large motions. Small motions often create tension. Freedom of motion is more important than economy of motion.

Generally, the way to allow the large muscles to work in either arm is to feel the natural weight of the arm falling, even in upward motions that are away from gravity.

In the left hand, don't squeeze the neck between the thumb and fingers. Rather, let the fingers drop to the strings from the top, or knuckle (metacarpophalangeal) joint. That includes the bar finger, which should be snapped lightly and effortlessly to the string, originating the movement from the top joint, not the arm.

Study the healthy alignment of all parts of your body. Highly recommended are Alexander technique, Feldenkrais method, Pilates, tai chi, and yoga.

Pay attention to tension in your legs and pelvic area and to your breathing, which are often sources of tension in your upper body.

—David Leisner

IRINA KULIKOVA
INJURY LED TO HEALTH AWARENESS

In the September 2010 cover story of Classical Guitar, *the exceptional Russian guitarist Irina Kulikova shared with writer Guy Traviss how an injury helped shape her attitudes toward physical, mental, and emotional health. Kulikova has continued on her upward career trajectory, traveling the world and releasing CDs (her most recent was* Reminiscences of Russia*), so her approach seems to be working. Here's an excerpt from that interview.*

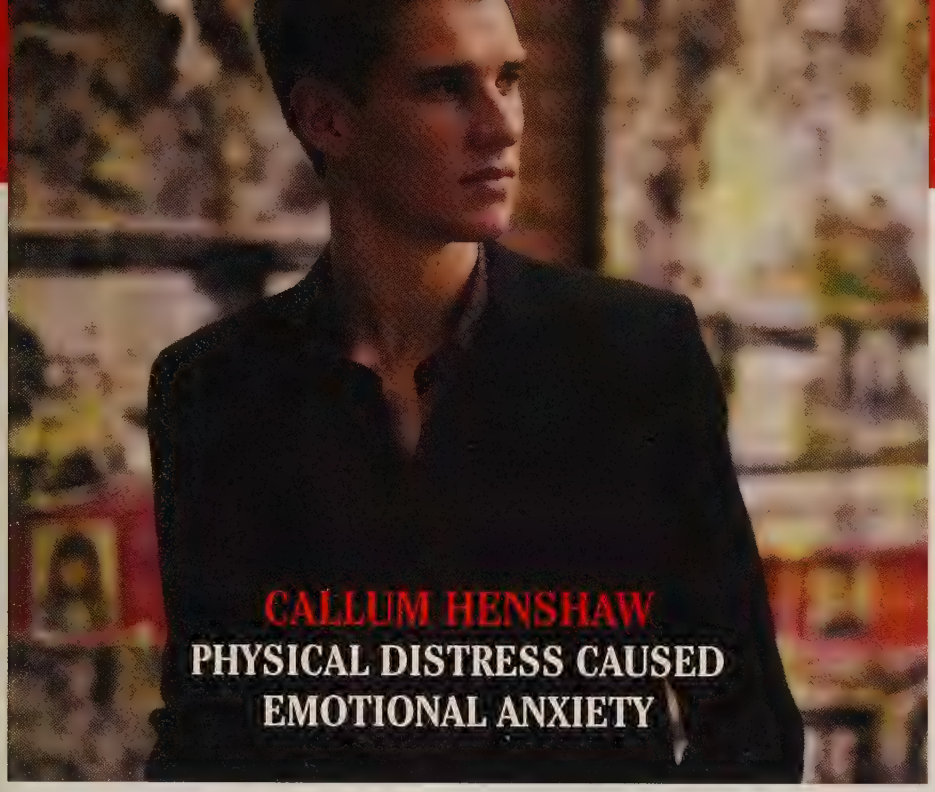
At 19, I broke my left arm, leaving me unable to play for 18 months. This gave me time to think—a bit more than I would have liked, but in that period my determination to continue with music grew even stronger. At that time, I was studying at the Gnessin Academy in Moscow. I obviously missed guitar lessons, but I also missed lessons in piano and conducting. Fortunately, there were a lot of different modules you could take, such as theory and historical studies. During this period, I disappeared into a lot of literature, medical books in particular. I developed an interest in the relationship between music and health: How to stay healthy as a musician, and how music can serve as medicine. Five years later, I wrote my master's thesis on this topic at the Mozarteum [in Vienna]: *The Mystery of Sound and Wholeness of the Artist: A Multidisciplinary Introduction to a Better Stage Performance.*

The paper is about dealing with physical and mental blocks, to be free and open in our stage performances. My interest in the subject was inspired by Ilsa Safarova, a Russian pianist who works with musicians struggling with physical or mental problems. She helped me when my arm was broken. After the long pause from concert life, I was afraid of going back on stage. But thanks to her treatment, I found my way again. Through personal experience and meeting so many other musicians who at some time suffered from blocks on stage, I became very much involved with this theme.

[As a treatment, Safarova] gave a special kind of massage and taught me to concentrate on energy flows through the body. She helped me to be more conscious about the way I practice and the way I live life in general. The intensity with which we work on a piece, the books we read, music we listen to, movies we see, people we meet, and all kinds of other daily rituals have a special meaning to us: [All of this] settles somewhere in our subconscious.

On the night of the concert, the body remembers everything that has happened in the months before, only twenty times stronger. To be able to transmit music with all its meaning and full intensity, musicians need to be whole themselves. This is what Safarova made me aware of. If your hands are trembling onstage, or if your memory is failing you, you have built up blocks somewhere. You can't take these blocks away by focusing on the night of the concert alone. You need to make changes in life generally. For example, be open to experiment with tai chi or qigong. Get some good massages or go to an acupuncturist. Learn to concentrate on your breathing and movement. Try different kinds of mental and physical training. Create a special atmosphere while you're practicing at home. All these things help to create a sense of inner harmony that you bring to the stage.

I know that music education is for a large part about discovering technical aspects of our instrument and developing a broad knowledge of music. But it is also about the whole of our physical, emotional, intellectual, intuitive, and spiritual development. That's why I work with my students on more than technique and musical interpretation alone. I encourage them to open their imagination to any piece they play, to find out what inspired the composer. But also to find their own way in a spiritual direction. I'm sure this helps to become more whole as a person; to open up more of our gifts and unite them in beautiful music.



CALLUM HENSHAW
PHYSICAL DISTRESS CAUSED EMOTIONAL ANXIETY

Cal Henshaw is one of the top young guitarists in Australia, winner of multiple guitar competitions and already a world traveler—this past December he played and taught a master class at the Saigon International Guitar Festival in Vietnam. His latest album, Echo & Return, *is reviewed on page 80.*

In mid-2014, I had to admit to myself that there was something seriously wrong with my arms. I had returned to Australia after spending six months, on the back of an honors year, preparing and competing throughout Europe. I practiced, carried all my belongings, including my heavy guitar, and was frequently in stressful situations. I ignored warning signs from my body. This was the beginning of my journey through injury. Even still, I do not know precisely what it is, but it resulted in hot, tickling, prickling pain and discomfort in my forearms. Not understanding what was occurring in my body was a significant source of anxiety—it was difficult to articulate, difficult to detect, and it was irregular.

During this time, I also suffered extreme emotional stress that eventually led to significant mental health issues and depression. Luckily, I have a remarkable mentor who was able to support me in a number of ways. Tim Kain [of the Australian quartet Guitar Trek, and long a top player Down Under] is a brilliant musician, guitarist, and teacher. But foremost he is a sensitive, understanding, and thoughtful human who was able to *see* me during this period. I still feel that in some of the best lessons I had with Tim, I never touched the guitar; we simply talked.

Equally significant was my discovery—with the help of some very special friends—of Greta von Gavel, a physiotherapist… but not. Greta helped me understand the body in a more holistic way—what was happening in my arms was connected to my back, my legs, the way I hold my stomach when I sit, the way I lock my knees when I stand. Above all, she helped me understand the connection between my mind and my body. The emotional struggles, mental health issues, and my arms were one and the same. It was only then that I was able to start truly working on recovery—by addressing my whole self.

I started practicing in small blocks—two to three minutes at a time with plenty of rest—and increased the length over a number of months. It was important to me at this time to find something that was musically engaging but also technically achievable. Manuel M. Ponce's *Variations sur 'Folia de España' et Fugue*, with its very short, intricate, and exquisite variations entertained my mind, while my fingers weren't strained by playing for too long.

This process kindled a different kind of enjoyment of the guitar. Physically, it was such a comparative rarity to be playing guitar that I relished the moments, and each one was imbued with the focused release of tension. That tactile enjoyment and relaxation is something I was able to carry back to the stage when I finally returned… and for the first time I was truly enjoying performing.

JULIAN BREAM
ACCIDENT CHANGED HOW MAESTRO PLAYED GUITAR

In July 1984, the incomparable master-guitarist Julian Bream was seriously injured in an automobile accident near his Dorset, England, home. Swerving his MG sports car to avoid another vehicle, he left the roadway and crashed into the side of bridge, suffering multiple fractures to his right elbow. Fortunately, his hand was not injured. Still, the recovery was long and arduous, as he told Classical Guitar *writer/editor Clive Kilvington (1944–1999) in the September 1993 issue, edited below.*

I had to do a fantastic lot of practice initially. About a month after the accident, I did 15 minutes just moving the fingers, then half an hour, then 40, 50 minutes, then an hour. [I'd do simple] diatonic and chromatic scales, and arpeggios. I worked in front of a mirror and I would watch what was going on, and I gradually built up my technique again. And then I carried that [regimen] on because I really enjoyed it. I had to change my right-hand position slightly because of the accident, and then the left hand, too; I did a double-change.

[On my right hand] I changed the position of my thumb, and I'm quite happy to have also changed my wrist

position. Whereas previously I kept it more or less the same throughout a performance—although I moved it up and down the strings—now I'm quite ready to change the angle, to move it as I feel. It's not a very pure outlook to technique, but it's one that suits me now. I also notice that guitar players in general don't fuss with their right hands anything like they used to, in terms of the old Tárrega bent wrist. And I'm not at all sure that's a good thing either—the thing with the Tárrega bend, you didn't have to support the wrist, it just fell that way. But this flatter method, you have to consciously support the wrist.

[On my left hand] I tended to play with rather flat fingers, and I didn't notice it until I saw the scenes from the films on the guitar in Spain [a British TV series he made called *Guitarra*!]. I looked at my left hand and asked myself, do I really play like that? It looked wrong. I hadn't actually seen myself playing for such a long time, which you don't do in the normal course of events. The palm of my hand was too far away from the fingerboard. And what a hell of a job it was to rectify it, too.

It sort of sounded all right, but I thought I'd never develop my left hand if I continued to play that way; and that was very hard to achieve at my age. Being virtually self-taught, I have always had to approach these things a bit like trial and error—and a lot of trial, specifically. But I'm glad I did it. I really had to slave, but I'm so pleased I did it.

[The accident] was certainly a pretty traumatic experience. It does have an effect on your life and outlook upon things. It was terribly bad luck to be involved in such a catastrophic accident; really, I'm lucky to be alive. It gave me another dimension of feeling to have gone through an experience of that kind. It did change my life. I stopped for a month, and maybe that was good, too. The initial thought was, 'Maybe I'll never play again.' But as soon as I could move my fingers I *knew* I'd play again.

Note: Though Bream did continue to play for many years after that story was published, in his last CG *interview, in the December 2014 issue, he told Thérèse Wassily Saba, "I can't play anymore. Due to an injury to my left hand, I haven't played a piece of music on the guitar for three years." That must be another story…*

DAN GRIFFITH
PHYSICAL THERAPY WORKS WONDERS

Dan Griffith is an Arizona-based singer and songwriter who plays all sorts of different stringed instruments, including guitar, ukulele, and vihuela, and written music in many different styles. He has played songs in TV shows and commercials and is a voting member of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, who put on the Grammy Awards.

I began playing guitar in 7th grade in 1963. I studied music and classical guitar at the University of Toledo [Ohio]. I played in various bands and duets from 1963 to 1983. At that time, I developed a pain in my right wrist. (I am left-handed but I play right-handed). It got so bad that I could not play more than 15 minutes without suffering for the next 24 hours. I could not pick up a coffee cup nor do a push up.

I went to two surgeons, and both diagnosed me with carpal tunnel syndrome. They both wanted to do surgery, but my fear of permanently damaging my hand kept me from surgery. So for the next 12 years, I played very little—not more than 30 minutes in a week! My time turned to a career at Motorola [electronics].

Then, in 1995, while working at Motorola, I got a 15-minute upper back massage at work. The therapist hit a knot in my upper back and my arm was on fire! She found more [muscle knots] in my shoulder in the front and worked on them. My arm, from fingers to shoulder, was in intense pain for the next eight hours or so, and this was the same type of pain I would get when I played guitar.

After that episode, I went to a professional therapist and had six one-hour sessions working on my upper body. I was also given stretching exercises to do. It was a miracle: After six weeks of treatment, my wrist problem was gone! Twenty-one years later, I still do the stretching and I still need to get massage work done once or twice every year or two, but today I play two to five hours a day. I was cured without surgery, just massage and exercises.

JOHN E. WALKER
NERVE ISSUES FROM PLAYING AND WORK

John E. Walker is an amateur guitarist who lives in Billings, Montana. Here, he talks about how his love of playing classical guitar was derailed by a nerve problem.

I've been suffering from ulnar nerve issues in my right forearm for many years. In the mid-1990s, I put down the electric guitar after many years of being obsessed with it and decided I was ready to commit myself fully to the classical guitar. I would spend my days working at the computer as a computer tech/network admin, and four to six hours every evening working on my two hours of standard classical guitar repertoire. I played this repertoire at various weddings and churches for a couple of years and wanted to become the best player I could become.

However, my hopes and dreams were eventually dashed, as I began to experience numbness from my right elbow, down to my ring and pinky fingers. I tried moving my mouse hand from my right hand to my left—which I still do to this day—but it didn't alleviate the numbness. I eventually saw a specialist, but the stretches he gave me weren't enough to combat my growing issue. So, I reluctantly put down the classical guitar and went back to playing electric guitar in country and rock bands. I have always been able to do that because solid-body guitars are thinner, and I usually stand while playing. I believe that my long days of computer work, combined with nights sitting hunched over my classical guitar, with my forearm resting on the lower bout, all combined to create a perfect storm for my ulnar nerve.

Fast forward 20 years... I can now play acoustic guitar again in moderation (and have been gigging my solo acoustic material on and off for several years). I spend more time working on my "flamenco-jazz" stuff these days than classical pieces. But I love it all and want to do it all again. Only this time I am aware that I have to remember not to over-do things. Maybe one day, after I've retired from my computer-related job, I can go back to spending hours every day playing the classical guitar.

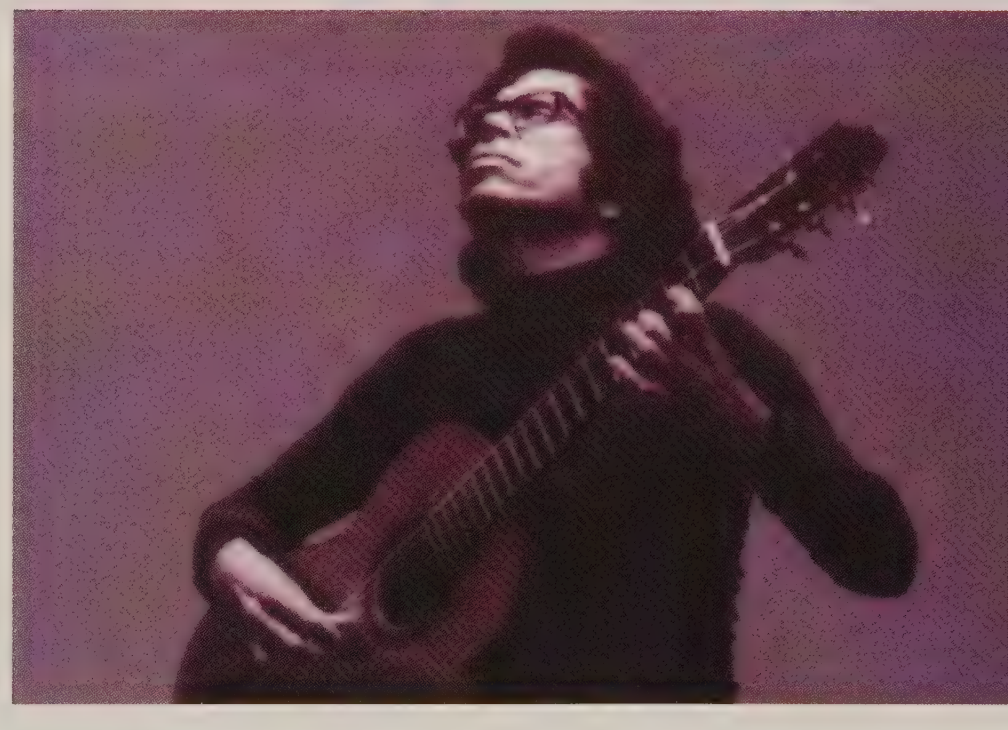
LILY AFSHAR
DON'T OVERDO IT!

A brief memory from Lily Afshar:

There was a time when my left hand fingertips turned green due to a chemical reaction from normal body oils to the guitar strings. It was during my Doctoral years, when I was preparing a concert, which, in hindsight, should have been split into two programs. It consisted of all challenging pieces: Bach's Fourth Lute Suite, the Ginastera *Sonata*, Sor's *Grand Solo*, Albeniz's *Mallorca*, *Sevilla*, *Torre Bermeja*, and *Tango*, the Ponce *Suite*, and Rodrigo's *Invocation and Dance*. I was practicing daily and through the night.

One day, I noticed that there was a small split on my first finger. My teacher kept having me go over the opening of *Sevilla*, where you have a half-bar going to a full bar while bringing out the middle voice clearly. I remember practicing that opening passage over and over again until, on the day of my concert, the bar would get caught on the split on my finger, which had now grown bigger in only one day. This led to the cancellation of my concert. That evening, I had four stitches put on my index finger. I remember it did not hurt and it did not bleed, either. I was practicing again soon as if nothing had happened.

But this taught me a big lesson about the importance of programing. You don't need to play all the pieces that you know in one concert. Teachers should dissuade students from doing that, however ambitious they are. In my case, I was lucky it did not lead to a more serious injury.

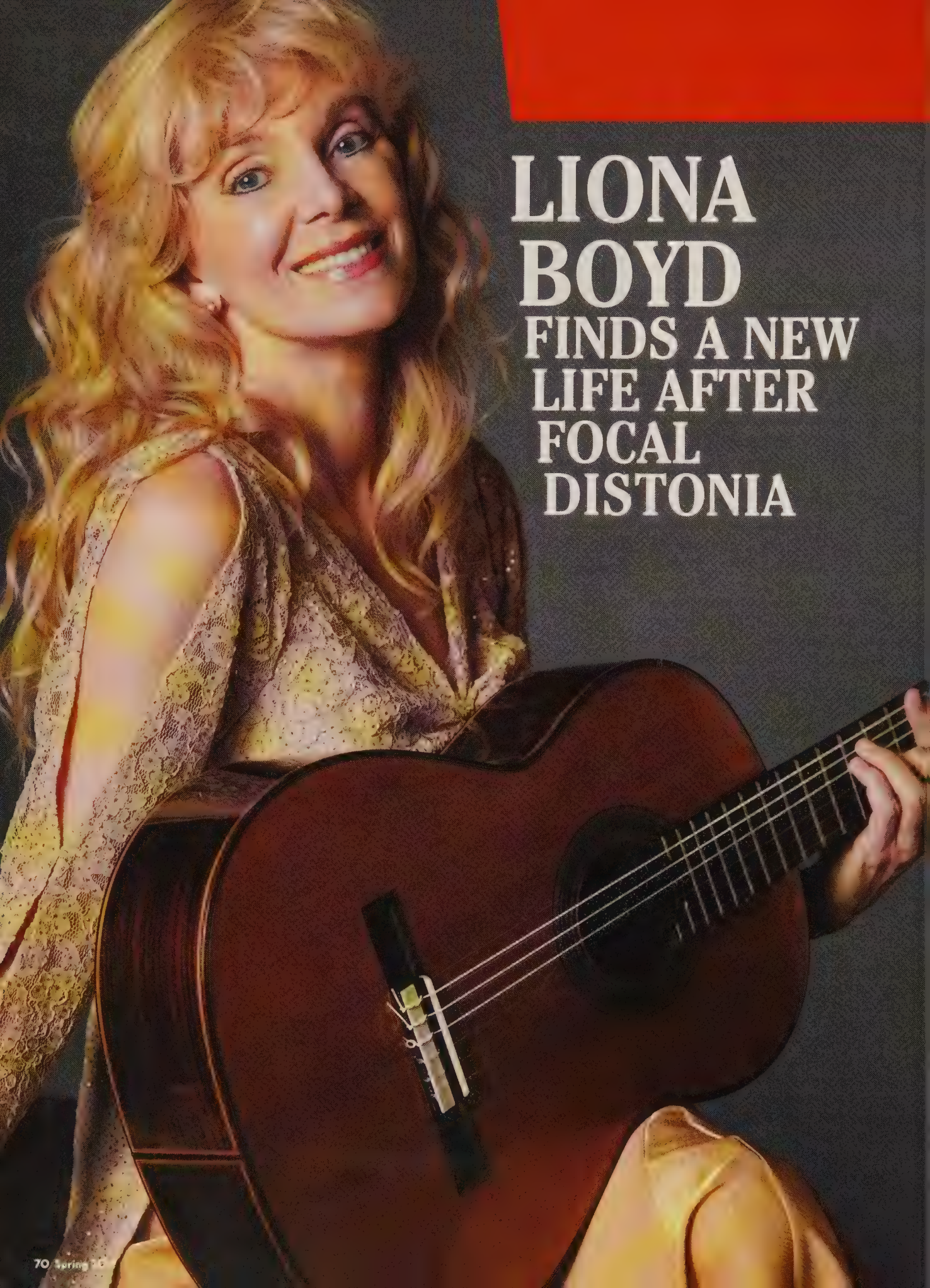


LEO BROUWER
A DESPERATE SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM

In a 1984 interview in CG, the great Cuban composer/guitarist Leo Brouwer revealed to writer Gareth Walters that an issue with a single fingernail had serious consequences.

This is becoming dramatic and I have to solve it because I need to play. It's a necessity for me to play and to communicate through the guitar. The problem started when I contracted some allergy that was starting to spoil my nail, and the sound of this infected nail was horrible. I had some very important concerts coming up; the most important was one of a series in New York called "The Great Virtuosos," including Segovia, Yepes, Lagoya, and me, and if I cancelled it would have been awful. So I transposed all the actions and articulations of that finger onto the other three.

I played the concert and was very happy with the results, but then continued a very long tour of the States—about 30 concerts—then Canada, then Belgium, then Holland, and as a result of all this playing, the finger atrophied and the tendon damaged. It is still damaged and I cannot play perfectly, and so I have to reconstruct my hand.



LIONA BOYD FINDS A NEW LIFE AFTER FOCAL DISTONIA

London-born Canadian Liona Boyd was one of the most popular figures on the international classical guitar circuit from the mid-'70s through the turn of the millennium. She became a musical icon in Canada (winner of five Juno Awards), toured the globe, played for world leaders (from Queen Elizabeth to Fidel Castro), appeared often on U.S. television, recorded many well-received albums, and was living a comfortable life in Beverly Hills—until her career was suddenly and inexplicably jeopardized in 2002. Unknown to her (at the time) she had developed musician's focal dystonia, which affected the middle finger on her right hand and thus left her unable to play advanced pieces, derailing her career.

Below, edited from a recent phone interview, Boyd recounts some of the many ups and downs of her own long journey dealing with FD. Unlike David Leisner, who claims to have fully recovered from his FD, Boyd is not "cured." But she has successfully reinvented herself as a singer-songwriter (who still plays some classical pieces). These days she splits her time between living in Toronto and, during the winter, Palm Beach, Florida. This year will see the release of a new CD of her original songs, called No Remedy for Love, *and also the second volume of her autobiography, which will deal in part with her struggles with FD—a topic about which she has been courageously vocal in recent years.*

I didn't have any pain. I didn't lose any sensation. The first manifestation was that my tremolo, which was always very smooth, started to become uneven. It was my favorite technique—I loved to manipulate the dynamics and the pacing, and I became well known for it. Laurindo Almeida said I had "the best tremolo in the business." Then the arpeggios started getting uneven, so a piece like *Spanish Romance* became impossible because the middle finger wouldn't behave itself, and the alignment of the fingers was all messed up. I was on a long tour and struggling every night. I felt I was fighting my fingers. I was constantly looking in the mirror trying to figure out, "What am I doing wrong? Did I file my nails incorrectly?" It was a complete mystery to me and I'd sometimes cry myself to sleep at night in hotel rooms.

At first, the NIH [National Institute of Health] believed that FD was a neurological *disease*, which was totally the wrong word. It's a *condition*. It doesn't affect anything else but a very specific repeated motion, which for me involved the middle finger. I thought there was something wrong with my hand that perhaps my fingers were growing together! But it's in the brain, and it's triggered by repetitive motions in the fingers when overplaying an instrument. Over time, the specific finger maps in the brain can become confused or "smudged," as they say. Irony of ironies, the last classical concert I did during that period [in early 2003] was a benefit concert for UCLA's brain research department, but no one, including me, knew I had focal dystonia. At that point, I quit performing.

At the Scripps Institute in La Jolla, California, they ran some tests that determined that I had no neurological damage, and actually they were the ones who first diagnosed it as Task Specific Focal Dystonia, which is also sometimes called Musician's Focal Dystonia. Of course I didn't want to believe that too much guitar playing could be harmful. I thought maybe there was some unconscious reason, like I wanted to leave my marriage because my husband was always slightly jealous of my guitar—he didn't really understand it. When I started having problems he thought I could just paint instead! [Eventually she asked him for a divorce, but they remain friends.]

The NIH knew it was caused by overpractice and they thought Botox might be a solution. It temporarily paralyzes the muscles, so your fingers become limp. Then, as the strength is coming back, you retrain the muscles. But the NIH admits it has not had success with guitarists, or very limited success, so I think that's the wrong protocol. I went up there four times and I was injected with Botox, but it didn't work for me. They also made me a few splints—I remember working for hours and hours with the splints trying to make my fingers behave. It was very frustrating.

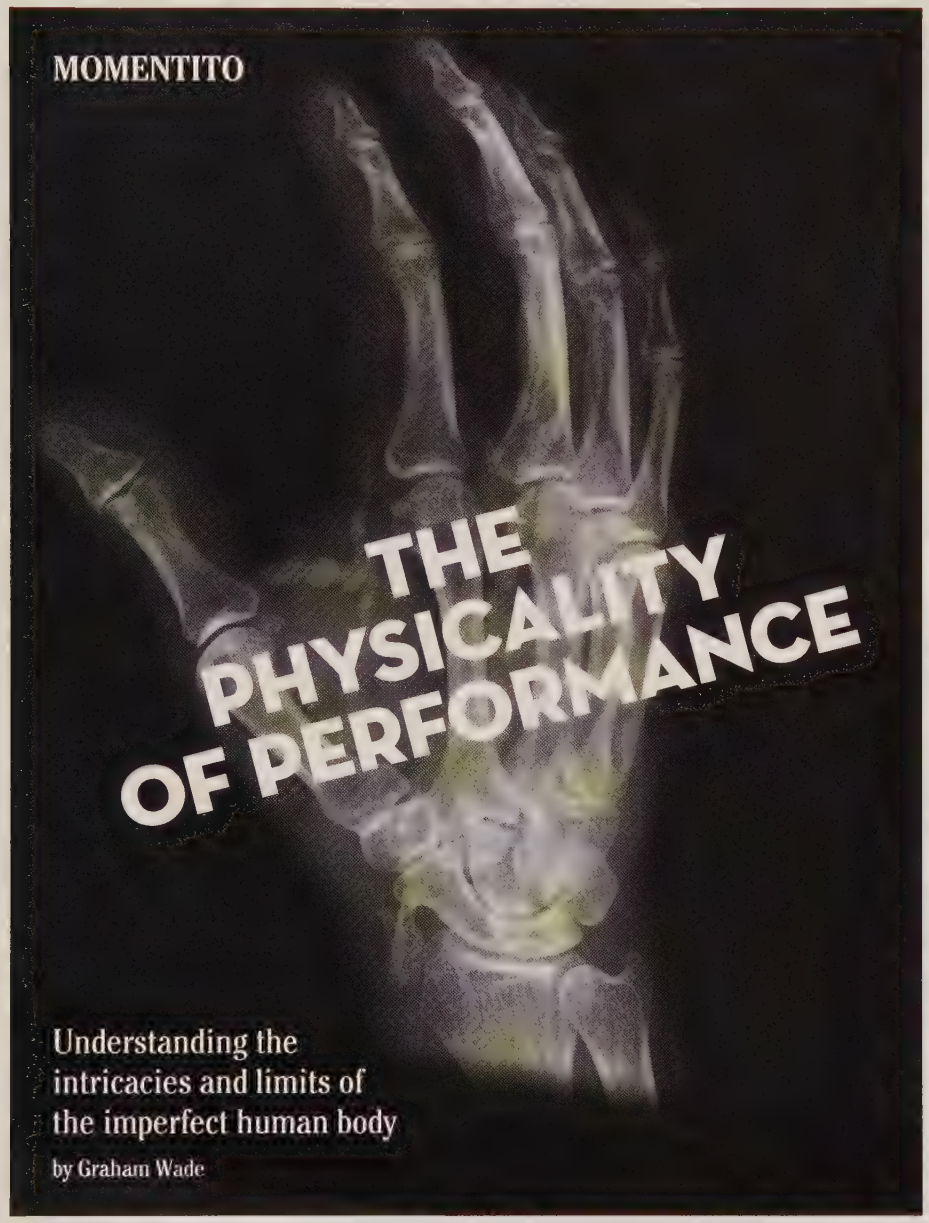
Then I tried all these wild, crazy things: Rolfing, hypnotherapy, acupuncture—which isn't wacko, of course, but which didn't work for me—Alexander Technique [for posture]. I visited a witch doctor who danced around me and spat on me, claiming it would improve my energy. I tried Scientology for about a month at the Celebrity Centre [in Hollywood]. I met Tom Cruise there and he said, "We can cure you!" But $2,000 dollars later ...nothing! I spent a fortune on all these different therapists, flying all over the country consulting various people.

I'm still not "recovered" from it. I have improved a little bit by relaxing my right hand. Dr. Joaquin Farias, a world expert in FD, said what it would involve to really get back my former technique is sitting down every day and consciously retraining my fingers over a long period. The problem is, I'm so excited about this new chapter of my career as a singer-songwriter that I always have projects on the go, and I'm a driven personality, so I haven't had the time to devote to that, and I also have a busy personal life in two countries.

What I did was I quit performing for a few years, then I played with pick for a while, and I became a singer-songwriter, which has actually been in me since I was a little kid—I was always writing poetry and stories. I even wrote some country songs for a while. But I never in a million years thought I would sing. I found that I *do* have a voice, and really enjoy singing. Nobody expects me to be Celine Dion! I was lucky that I could do something else in addition to still playing classical guitar, which will always be my great love.

I perform some classical pieces, but I play with a more relaxed technique and it's changed my repertoire. I play some of the easy pieces, like Erik Satie's *Gymnopédie*, and I can manage a few little Tárrega pieces, but I can't play Bach's *Chaconne*. The arpeggios are still not as smooth as they were, I use my thumb more, and the tremolo still eludes me, which is frustrating. But quite honestly, I don't have any great a desire to play my former repertoire, because I did it for so many years.

I feel terrible for the many musicians—and there are thousands who struggle with focal dystonia, often terrified that they're not going to be able to support themselves and their families, so they keep quiet about their condition. After I decided to come "out of the closet." I felt I had a mission to warn other musicians about this. It's hard. It's emotional. You feel so desperate. We're all so in love with the guitar, or whatever instrument we play, that the thought of not having it in our lives is devastating. I know that I was lucky to reinvent myself and I'm truly loving what I do now. It feels almost like a new life. And it never would have happened if I didn't develop this condition. **CG**



THE PHYSICALITY OF PERFORMANCE

Understanding the intricacies and limits of the imperfect human body

by Graham Wade

> "ANDRÉS SEGOVIA APPEARED TO SOLVE THE INHERENT DIFFICULTIES OF BEING A HEALTHY MUSICIAN BY PRACTICING FIVE HOURS A DAY IN FOUR UNITS OF AN HOUR AND A QUARTER. BETWEEN EACH SESSION HE RELAXED—GOING FOR A WALK, MEETING FRIENDS, READING, ETC."

Last fall in the United Kingdom, we received the message that Miloš Karadaglic, the London-based guitarist from Montenegro (with a large international following), "is experiencing major problems with his right hand and his doctors have advised him to cancel all work for the next year." The player has explained how "the physical condition I was suffering from in 2015 has most unfortunately returned," The problem occurred as he was about to embark on what he described as "the most exciting tour of my career."

This situation should remind all performers of the pitfalls of the professional life. Various guitarists have endured similar misfortunes. Nicola Hall, a brilliantly virtuosic performer some years ago, is reputed to have experienced a severe right hand problem. This may have caused her to decide to leave the concert platform, a great loss to the world of music. David Leisner and Mark Ashford, two superb recitalists, suffered from right hand ailments, though they managed to fight their way back after a period of inactivity.

Other guitarists experience spinal problems. The older generation used a footstool under the left foot. Practicing in this position for hours a day over 30 or 40 years is bound to cause trouble. The end result is pain. Happily, a lot of thought has gone into the question of posture over recent years. The use of frames or "dynarettes" (specially-shaped rubber wedges placed on the left leg under the guitar) enables the guitarist to play with both feet firmly at the same level on the floor, thus maintaining equilibrium. The traditional position of the raised left foot also sometimes encourages drooping shoulders and bad physical posture.

When players are young and agile, these complications may not affect the individual. But as years go by, the body becomes less resilient. Bad postural habits over decades build up structural deficiencies that may eventually result in a need for medical or osteopathic assistance.

Of course, other instruments have associated physical problems. The violinist's posture, with the instrument under the chin, is not exactly ergonomic. Yehudi Menuhin was one of the greatest players in the violin's history and was an early advocate of using yoga and what he called "oscillating exercises" before and after practicing. His book *Violin and Viola* in the Menuhin Music Guide Series (Macdonald,

1976), described these exercises in detail. Something along these lines—establishing relaxation and flexibility throughout the entire body—is helpful for all instrumentalists.

To return to the problem of the guitarist's hands, I have always taught students that the hand is like an airplane. In other words, the hand is good at what it can naturally do, but not suitable for stress outside the flight envelope. (A Boeing 747 is obviously not designed for aerobatics, whereas fighter aircraft can fly inverted with relative ease.) Attempt hand movements on the guitar that an individual's hand is not yet capable of enacting and trouble will definitely occur.

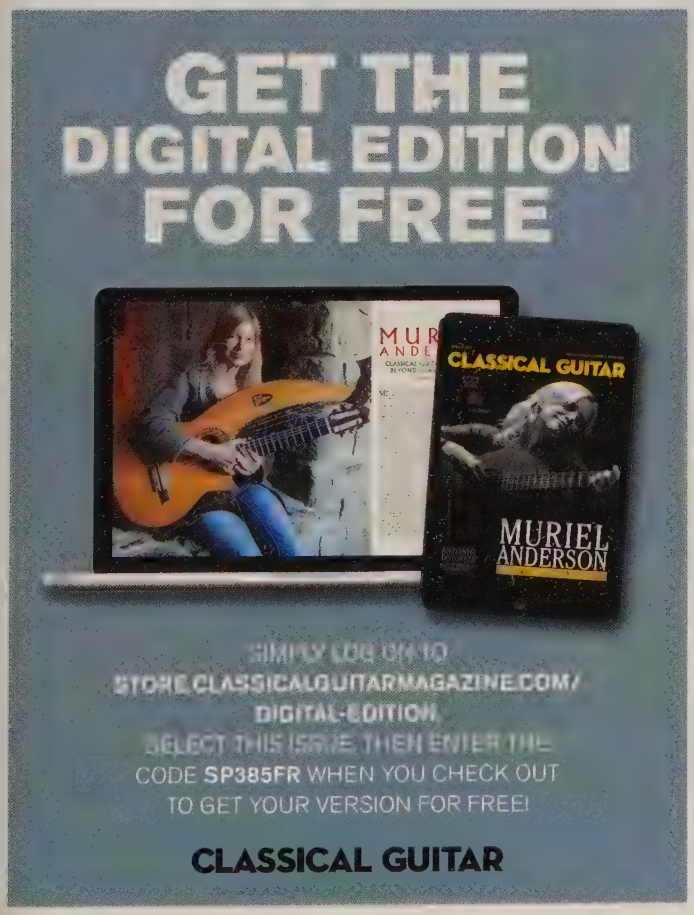
Such movements in the left hand include excessive stretches between fingers—as is often necessary in the music of Barrios—or the necessary precision of note values, as in a Bach Fugue, where holding a finger down while manipulating others can cause damage. Barres are frequently a source of tension, while left-hand slurs may create an overuse syndrome.

The right hand, though apparently in a natural position (unlike the left hand, which often has to produce "unnatural" pressures and maneuvers), can also become crippled by excessive practice or the wrong kind of practice. The load on either hand must not exceed that which it is capable of withstanding. Naturally, problems increase when one is a professional player. After all, the amateur can be warned not to exceed the "load" limit, but recitalists, with a repertoire of solo and concerto material, are required almost daily to take their technical apparatus up to and beyond what is comfortable. When a concert is in the offing, the heat is on and players must practice incessantly to reach the standard.

Andrés Segovia appeared to solve the inherent difficulties of being a healthy musician by practicing five hours a day in four units of an hour and a quarter. He relaxed between each session—going for a walk, meeting friends, reading, etc. He had large, powerful hands, but his exercising of them seemed to be within the limits of what they could achieve. With so many eminent guitarists, frightening stories have occasionally circulated of disruptions to their musical life through some practice-related impediment. Sometimes, dealing with such complications involved a systematic change in hand position or posture—or recourse to a hand surgeon.

What we need to remember is that human beings are not machines. With first-class sports personalities and ballet dancers, where the physical demands are considerable, injuries of one kind or another are inevitable from time to time. Playing a musical instrument is also amazingly demanding, involving not just the fingers but also the whole anatomy, the entire physical entity.

Joints, tendons, and muscles all have their stress limitation zones. Overuse syndrome affects many kinds of activity, such as typists and machine operators. In instrumental playing, musicians train their hands to achieve the virtually impossible. When nothing goes wrong, we are happy. But sometimes, through no fault of our own, things go drastically wrong. As far as the musical profession is concerned, such dilemmas go with the territory. **CG**



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MATTHEW WASHBURN PHOTO

THE SONIC JOURNEYS OF ZSÓFIA BOROS

Textures, atmospheres, and 'restrained virtuosity' mark fascinating set

by Mark Small

Local Objects
Zsófia Boros
ECM New Series

On *Local Objects,* the second album by Zsófia Boros for the ECM label, the Hungarian-born guitarist presents a program of largely atmospheric music. Her ECM debut, *En Otra Parte*, featured predominantly melodic pieces, while this outing emphasizes texture more than tunefulness. But while the nature of the music is different, Zoros's restrained virtuosity is still in evidence, and her playing once again draws the listener into her very appealing sonic world.

The album opens with the almost sulking "Nocturne" by French composer Mathias Duplessy. One of the album's more melodic selections, it opens with rumbling major and minor seconds in the bass strings before a yearning melody emerges. The darkness of the minor-key piece with occasional flashes of light provided by movements to major, sets the tone for the album.

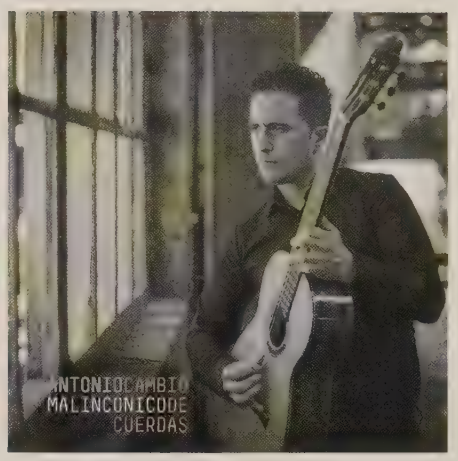
The disc's best-known selection is Italian composer Carlo Domeniconi's "Koyunbaba." Boros easily handles its trilling melodies, rapid pull-offs and arpeggios. In a departure from renditions by others, Boros uses paper to lightly mute the bass strings in the Presto movement. She exploits the work's inherent chiaroscuro with many timbre and dynamic shifts.

In a nod to South American music, Boros included music by composers spanning the 20th century. "Inspiração" by Anibal Augusto Sardinha (aka "Garoto"), hearkens to an early style of Brazilian music with its charming melody and familiar chord progressions. Egberto Gismonti's "Celebração de Núpcias" is all about texture, with arpeggio accompaniment figures that outline often-dissonant harmonies. "Milonga," from the extensive catalog of Argentinian Jorge Cardoso (b. 1949), sways with its dance rhythm, circle of fifths progressions, and attractive melody.

Franghiz Ali-Zadeh's "Fantasie" possesses an improvisational character and is the longest single-movement work on the album clocking in at almost nine minutes. The Azerbaijani composer intersperses angular modal melodic fragments with jagged chords. Al Di Meola's "Vertigo Shadow," with a variety of arpeggio patterns and fleet-fingered pizzicato lines, showcases the hallmarks of Di Meola's style. Boros dives deeply into both works' textures.

She ends with "Gothenburg," a lament for the end of a relationship by Australian Alex Pinter. With sprinkles of harmonics, quick pizzicato lines, and enigmatic final notes, Pinter hints at inevitable questions that follow the end of a love affair.

The pristine ECM sound with virtually no room noise is a perfect canvas for Boros's ultra-clean technique and predominantly light touch. She takes listeners on a journey that commences across darkened landscapes and ends anticipating a new dawn. **CG**



Hymn to the Muse

Antigoni Goni
Timespan Recordings

Different shades of "Greek" music

It feels like a long time since I witnessed Antigoni Goni win the GFA, which is hardly surprising since her victory against a strong field, including Elena Papandreou, was in 1995. The subtitle that adorns this 2016 release—*Greek Music for Guitar*—is a tad misleading, in that only two of the six works are by Greek composers. Of these, *Gioconda's Smile* by Manos Hadjidakis is arranged by Tulio Peramo, who is Cuban. But the Greek spirit of the program as a whole is not in dispute, the title track by Dusan Bogdanovic drawing inspiration from poetry by Mesomedes of Crete. Elsewhere, Atanas Ourkouzounov presents contemporary settings of traditional Greek melodies, including the musical depiction of a rather alarming whirlwind romance. Sergio Assad then weighs in with some suitably Hellenic imagery in *Three Greek Letters*, before the senior figure of Stanley Silverman (b. 1938) steals the show with the hypnotic *Eridos*. This piece, like the Assad and the Ourkouzounov, is dedicated to Antigoni Goni. The same isn't stated of the Bogdanovic, although she did give the premiere in 2005.

More familiar than any of the above are *Two Epitafios* by Theodorakis, which also appear in the set of four released by John Williams in 1971. Throughout the program, the performance is elegant, assured and, when the occasion demands, dramatic. The fact that the Assad and the Silverman were recorded a decade earlier in a different location is detectable neither in the playing nor the sound capture.

—Paul Fowles

Infusion

Jason Vieaux (guitar)
and Julien Labro (accordions)
Azica Records

Unusual instrumental pairing yields fascinating results

Jason Vieaux is well known to guitarists, but here he has chosen the accordion family to record with, a relatively rare combination and not prolific in its original music, so it is no surprise to find that none of the pieces in this recital was originally written for this pairing. However, the mix of music is quite fascinating.

The album begins with Leo Brouwer's *Tres Danzas Concertantes*, originally for guitar and orchestra. Hearing it in this new version by Labro, it feels like a completely different listening experience than the original, with all the orchestra pared down to just the accordion, which gives it a more intimate feeling as a result. The beautiful *Antonia* by jazz guitarist Pat Metheny (a favorite of Vieaux's) is a welcome friend, with plenty of room for both players to shine in extended soloing. It is sandwiched between the Brouwer and the *Suite Retratos* by Radames Gnattali, in which the duo is augmented to a quartet with the addition of Peter Dominguez on bass and Jamey Haddad on drums and percussion. It is here that the title really comes into play, as Vieaux and Labro have included improvisations amid the structure of the four movements, thus making the usual 20 minutes into over 28—altogether an interesting experiment.

A rare Piazzolla piece called *Escualo* is again treated to the improvisation/expansion approach, and that leads to a most unexpected finale—the '80s synth-pop hit "Everybody Wants to Rule the World" by Tears for Fears, a great toe-tapping finish.

—Chris Dumigan

Cambio de Cuerdas

Antonio Malinconico
Malin Music

Fine Latin-flavored mix of solo and two-guitar pieces

This is a classy Latin-centered release from a Swiss guitarist with Italian roots. Of the 13 items on offer, only one exceeds five minutes; some are familiar and others less so. Egberto Gismonti's *Agua e Vinho* is present, as are Leo Brouwer's *Un Dia de Noviembre*, and that charming *Carillon* encore miniature by Benvenuto Terzi. Newer ground is explored in the three compositions credited to Martin Müller, who also performs as second guitarist on two tracks. There also appears to have been some overdubbing on other items, most notably the opening *Parazula* by Celso Machado.

It all results in a polished and agreeable middleweight program, the close-mic soundscape further enhancing the sense of intimacy. The chemistry between Malinconico and Müller proves fruitful and allows scope for some impressive improvised dialogue. The one slight niggle is in the evergreen *Natalia* by Antonio Lauro (sometimes billed on older recordings as *Vals Criollo* and in print as *Vals Venezolano No.3*), to which some minor, but curiously irritating, alterations have been made. If Malinconico is using material drawn from a source other than the published score, then fair enough, but there's nothing in the notes or accompanying press release to suggest this is the case. The musical content as we know it has been left undisturbed in the same composer's *Andreína* (aka *Vals Venezolano No.2*).

A quality mix of the known and the unknown from a stylish and assured player whose name will be new to many.

—PF

Latinoamerica!

Fabiano Borges—with Ted Falcon (violin), Pablo Fagundes (harmonica), et al
fabianoborges.com.br

Much variety and stellar playing on expansive Latin set

This expansive double-CD has 26 tracks of widely varying Latin material, including seven by Borges, and the great majority of it rare to CD. The first thing you notice is that Borges is a master of his instrument (a 7-string with an extra low bass) and there are no doubts about his ability to cope with all the musical complexities he presents.

Most of the pieces are at once immediate, melodic, and harmonically diverse, and the variety of extra musicians, who are individually spread over the entire double-album, helps make the set even more compelling. The opening five tracks, all written by Borges, are wonderful, especially the *Duas Pecas Brasilieras*, with harmonica and percussion providing a warm and rich backdrop to the lovely harmonies. Another memorable work is the guitar duet *Sanfona* by Egberto Gismonti, with Borges aided Alvaro Henrique. One of the most famous pieces is *Sons de Carrilhoes*, but here it is in an imaginative guitar duet version that I wish I had the sheet music for! Another beautiful work, and yet another find from a composer who has written far more music than I have come across, is Ernesto Nazareth's *Apanhei-te, cavaquinho*, which bounces along in great fashion, arranged as a quartet for this project.

It is impossible to mention every piece here, but they are all outstanding. The CD is wonderfully recorded and great care has been taken with the packaging and the copious notes in two languages. A lovely set altogether.

—CD

Fernando Sor: 24 Progressive Lessons, 6 little Pieces

Norbert Kraft, Jeffrey McFadden
Naxos

Still much to learn for these guitar "lessons"

It could be said that Naxos has become perhaps the most prolific recording company that has dedicated a large amount of its time and effort to the guitar, and Norbert Kraft, as a performer and producer on much of the catalogue, has in no small way contributed to its elevated status in the guitar world. Jeffrey McFadden plays 12 of the 30 pieces offered here. He and Kraft deliver a slice of material, which nearly all guitarists who have studied the instrument will be familiar with. The notes by Graham Wade (with acknowledgements to the great Sor scholar Dr. Brian Jeffery) detail each lesson and one quickly realizes listening to this stream of musical didacticism that Fernando Sor, like Mozart, created music with a simplicity that belied its great depth. Those that are familiar with Sor's music will know what I mean—In almost every piece there is a phrase, passage, or section where the guitarist must think about devising a suitable way to realize the music convincingly.

Kraft plays Lesson No. 18 in B minor, from Book Two, quite beautifully. For the stuff of interminable study and practice for so many, it is great to hear these pieces played so delightfully and in such a straightforward yet lyrical manner. And McFadden gives us a valedictory rendering with the pretty little Op. 32 pieces. As a reference point, these performances are excellent and should be an essential part of both pupil's and teacher's CD collections alike. Highly recommended.

—Tim Panting

Contatos

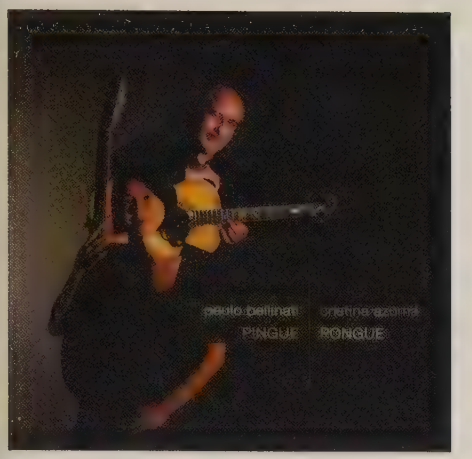
Christine Petit-D'Heilly
Altais Music

Appealing program of pieces from Argentina and Brazil

French guitarist Christine Petit-D'Heilly's latest is an all-South American program, comprised of works by a pair of Argentinians—Hector Ayala (his luminous seven-part *Suite Americana* kicks off the proceedings with lyrical splendor) and Astor Piazzolla (two tangos; *La morte del angel* was new to me)—and two Brazilians: Sergio Assad (*Aquarelle*) and Paolo Bellinati (*Suite Cantatos*). Petit-D'Heilly is a superb player—at once confident, graceful, expressive, and with a tremendous emotional range—and the variety in the program gives her ample opportunities to shine. Besides the Ayala, which is truly a thing of beauty, I was most impressed by the Assad, which boasts some of his loveliest writing in the middle "Valseana" movement, but also somewhat darker, more challenging bookends that require great precision and a strong attention to shifting dynamics from the guitarist.

Bellinati's five-part *Suite Contatos* is another very evocative piece of writing—quietly introspective for much of it, but not at all gloomy. Petit-D'Heilly even manages to let the silences between notes speak in the heartfelt "Pau de Chuva" movement; no small feat. I find myself coming back to this CD often, and when I do, I discover something new and unexpected I didn't catch on previous listenings. This guitarist clearly has a Latin soul: She has also been a member of several ensembles dedicated to Latin music, including the Atahualpa Quartet, Quartet Barrios Magoré, and the tango quintet Musicas Recuperdas. Definitely an artist to watch in the future!

—Blair Jackson



Pingue Pongue

Paulo Bellinati & Cristina Azuma
Rough Trade

A feast of Brazilian pieces served up by excellent duo

For this recording, Paulo Bellinati performs on his 1935 steel-string "serenade" guitar, while Cristina Azuma plays her Paulino Bernabe classical; this gives these duets a slightly different musical perspective than conventional classical-guitar duos, and it turns out to be a very attractive combination. The program contrasts moments of melancholic beauty and pathos with highly energetic, rhythmically-thrilling "show-stoppers." It mixes contemporary pieces with earlier works by various Brazilian composers.

Bellinati's compositions dominate, and quite rightly, as he has written some of the finest Brazilian guitar music. His most celebrated piece, *Jongo*, comes around the half-way mark in the program list, one, of the many high-points on this disc filled with wonderfully colourful Brazilian melodies and rhythms (as well as a remarkable 80-second percussive duet).

Azuma is also given the opportunity to display her admirable talent as composer with a joint effort written with Regino Albeniz—the lovely, haunting *Cancao*—which contrasts nicely with her own up-tempo fingerpicking-style work *Mon Frere*. Other composers represented are Anibal Augusto Sardinha (aka "Garôto," 1915–1955), Américo Jacomino ("Conhoto," 1889–1928); Honorino Lopes (1884–1909), and the great Antônio Carlos Jobim (1927–1994)—represented with the ballad *Amparo*, from 1970.

This is music-making of the highest order, with both players giving superb performances throughout.

—*Steve Marsh*

Música dels segles XVIII i XIX per a guitarra de cinc orders

Thomas Schmitt
La má de guido

Five-course guitar works well with early Romantic pieces

Thomas Schmitt enjoyed some prominence a few years ago as an exponent of the relatively short-lived and under-represented six-course guitar (*CG* October 2013). This 2016 release finds Schmitt matching a Stradivari-based five-course guitar with music generally considered to be after its time. His persuasively argued program notes, citing source material of the era, may be summed up as the highly plausible hypothesis that instruments with double courses didn't vanish from the face of the earth the moment luthiers starting producing guitars with six single strings.

So it is that we hear the type of instrument most readily associated with Sanz, Corbetta, and de Visée serving up an agenda from the late Classical/early Romantic epochs, in which the best-known and most featured composer is Antoine de Lhoyer (1768–1852). Schmitt makes no secret of the fact that this has involved adapting certain works from six courses to five, but the results are convincing, an achievement directly related to the lightness of touch and clarity of articulation that characterizes his performance as a whole.

Interestingly, no one I have played this recording for immediately identified Schmitt's instrument—built by José Angel Espejo in 1992—as a five-course guitar. Instead, the initial assumption was that, since we were clearly listening to music of the late 18th or early 19th century, and it wasn't being played on a modern guitar, it must be a six-string guitar of the pre-Torres period.

—PF

Passions

Duo Virtuosi: Virginia Luque (guitar) and Bojidara Kouzmanova (violin)
Iberia Productions

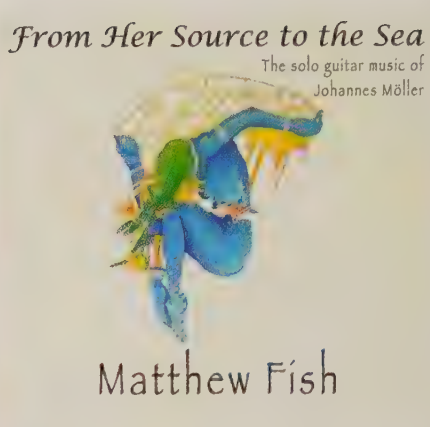
Guitar and violin are harmonious on Latin repertoire

Bulgarian Bojidara Kouzmanova and Spanish–born Virginia Luque here play works from the Latin/Spanish repertoire, including the well-known "Cantilena" from Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasilieras No. 5,* in a stunning arrangement and performance that really captures the essence and beauty of the writing, and also three of Federico Garcia Lorca's *Canciones Populares*, beautiful works that are surprisingly rare nowadays.

Kouzmanova's passionate playing comes to the fore in two movements from Piazzolla's wonderful *Histoire du Tango—Bordello 1900*, a vibrant performance that dances along attractively, together with the companion movement *Café 1930*, which provides a nice contrasting sound. (It's a shame that they didn't do the whole work, judging by this recording, as there was most certainly room to do so.) The only premiere in the recording is *Alma Argentina,* written by Luque—its very Piazzollan overtones provide a welcome and apt opening to the album.

Also here are five of the seven hauntingly beautiful *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* from Manuel de Falla, originally for soprano and piano, and which are so successful that they do not sound newly arranged at all. Two pieces by Granados—*La Maja de Goya* and *Maja Dolorosa 3*—and the popular *Libertango* from Piazzolla conclude what is largely a CD of arrangements in which the violin is generally more prominent, and the guitar, by necessity, usually the accompanist.

—CD



21st Century Spanish Guitar 2

Adam Levin
Naxos

Second offering continues great work

Resplendent in a slip-case displaying a painting by Leo D'Lázaro commissioned by the performer, this enterprising release forms part of what will be a series of four discs. The first was reviewed in *CG* July 2013, so no one can accuse Levin or his record company of rushing them out. All the works here were composed within the past decade, and all except *Dos Cantares* by Antón García Abril, are claimed as premieres. This said, none of the composers could be described as being at the start of their careers, the youngest being Eduardo Soutullo and Juan Manuel Ruiz (both b. 1968). The oldest is Luis De Pablo (b. 1930), who is one of three octogenarians on the program.

Despite being subtitled *Abstractions of Granados,* the opening *Caprichos No.11* by Leonardo Balada can be a little spiky at times, the quick-fire repeated note figures in the final movement providing an impressive showcase for Levin's considerable technical prowess. In contrast, the sumptuous soundscapes of *Interiores* by Jesús Torres offer a wider canvas for Levin's expressive powers. In the program as a whole, the language is occasionally challenging but never indigestible. *Elegía Otoñal* by Marc López Godoy even contains moments that take us back to the world of Segovia, as does the wonderfully retro offering by Antón García Abril. Only in the epic valedictory *Orión* by Juan Manuel Ruiz could the term "heavyweight" be applied.

A landmark recording by an outstanding practitioner.

—PF

Echo & Return

Callum Henshaw
callumhenshaw.com

Australian's packed disc is top-notch from start to finish

A project spanning three years and "interrupted" by a serious injury (which, coincidentally, he describes on page 66) *Echo & Return* has running through it conceptual strands of "theme and variations", "absence and return", the memories of which are both nostalgic and full of hope.

Australia has a penchant for producing world-class guitarists, and Callum Henshaw appears to show no sign of bucking that trend. His command of the instrument is immediately apparent with the opening *Valses Poéticos* by Granados. His athletic approach is fluid and relaxed without losing focus on the music's demands.

Le Départ by Napoleon Coste (1805–1883) is a slice of mid-19th century narrative depicting the final episode of the Crimean War—although there are no "battle" special effects (à la Barrios) here.

The disc is positively crammed, with 70 minutes of music: After the 16 minutes of Granados, there is Manuel Ponce's monumental *Variations sue la 'Folia de España' et Fugue* (at 25:48). I, like its dedicatee, Andrés Segovia, have great affection for it and Henshaw treats each variation with great care, producing a significant amount of coloration and dynamic shading. *From Kakadu* by Peter Sculthorpe (1929–2014), one of Australia's premier composers, follows, and the most "modern" piece, *Bleed-through*, for guitar and laptop (!) by Samuel Smith (b. 1985) conclude the proceedings; the latter being stylistically far-removed and not out of place as a soundtrack to a good horror movie.

—TP

From Her Source to the Sea: The Solo Guitar Music of Johannes Möller

Matthew Fish
Soundset

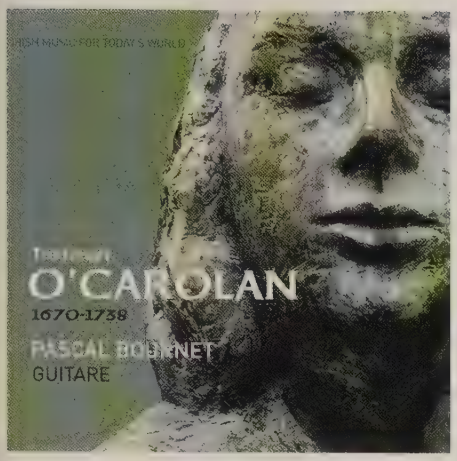
Sterling interpretations of Swedish composer's unique works

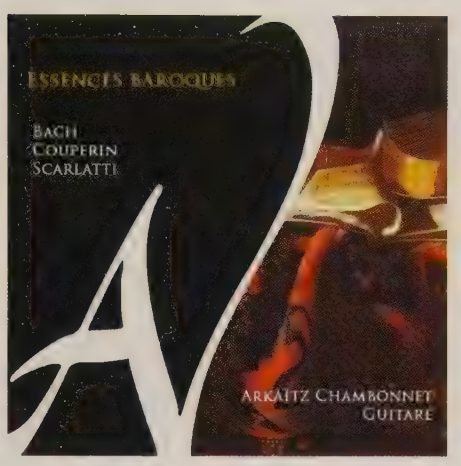
When I first came across Swedish guitarist Johannes Möller's music, it was obvious that he was a truly individual writer whose music looked and sounded like no one else's. His emotional compositions involve many complex arpeggiated patterns, usually with open strings interwoven with a very high tessitura, and an ethereal quality that is both very hard to read on the music, but wonderful to listen to when played by a master, as here in this recording by San Francisco guitarist Matthew Fish.

Typical of Möller's work is *Song to the Mother*, which has a nearly arrhythmic folk-like melody that almost sounds Celtic. Harmonics fly in and out, and together with bended notes and the arpeggio patterns, all make for a compellingly beautiful opening that truly sounds like nothing else you have ever heard.

A Star in the Sky, a Universe Within is another outstanding track on the album; among other unusual techniques, it requires the player to continue a rising tremolo pattern off the fingerboard, and to keep moving upwards. It sounds gimmicky, but really works. A selection from Möller's *24 Preludes* prove to be more compact but just as musically convincing, but it is more likely that you will return again and again to the longer works. Wonderfully played by Fish, and expertly recorded, this disc of Möller's music is a constant joy, at once unusual, unique, and always satisfying.

—CD





Turlough O'Carolan

Pascal Bournet
Autra

French guitarist offers more early Irish pieces

To say that the seemingly indefatigable French guitarist Pascal Bournet has a passion for early Irish music would be an understatement. He has previously released a trilogy of CDs devoted to the compositions of the celebrated blind 17th century harpist Turlough O'Carolan, and now here is another. Bournet's earlier recordings were scored for a larger instrumentation (violin, guitars, recorder, and mandolin) than this current one, which is one-third solo guitar and two-thirds guitar duo (with the exception of *Hugh O'Donell*, which is for trio).

O'Carolan's surviving 214 melodies are gathered together in Donal O'Sullivan's two-volume edition *Carolan—The Life, Times and Music of an Irish Harper*, and it is from this tome that Bournet has drawn 22 pieces for the program on this recording. O'Carolan's music has been handed down through the centuries as single melodic lines only, bereft of any bass line or harmonization; hence, when we hear the composer's music by various players, it can take many guises. What Bournet has done is to take these ancient melodies and instill them with new vitality and emotion.

O'Carolan's music lives in the gap between the "classical" and "folk" styles and that is very evident in many of the varied pieces on this disc. For the duets, Patrick Bournet joins Pascal and together they have skillfully produced an entertaining, enjoyable, and highly listenable album.

—SM

Essences Baroques

Arkaïtz Chambonnet
Ad Vitam Records

Brilliant turn on 3 Baroque giants

The Baroque "essences" of this recording are works by François Couperin (1668–1733), Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), and Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757). This not-uncommon grouping of contemporaries is a heartfelt project of French guitarist Arkaïtz Chambonnet. Indeed, the spur of inspiration for the recording was Couperin, whose place in the pantheon of Baroque composers is assured with works of great inventiveness and wit. Famed as a master of the keyboard—he wrote the treatise *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* (The Art of Playing the Harpsichord)—his music is generally associated with more intimate instrumental suites or chamber ensembles. *Les Barricades Mystérieuses* (The Mysterious Barricades) opens the recording and could be described as one of Couperin's "top ten hits," with recordings by such luminaries as David Russell and Scott Tennant. Chambonnet, however, also draws our attention to the gracious solemnity of the *Pompe Funèbre* from his less-heard second suite for viola da gamba.

Bach's Sonata for Violin BWV 1001 is next and Chambonnet infuses the fugue (reappearing in use for organ and lute) with extra counterpoint from the organ version. This fleshed-out version is beautifully proportioned for today's modern instrument. And if Chambonnet's aim was to realize the polyphonic potential of Baroque music on the classical guitar, then here he has been completely successful. Authoritative renditions of Scarlatti sonatas K208, 322, 380, and 481 put him in the higher echelon of players. Strongly recommended.

—TP

Pour Guitare

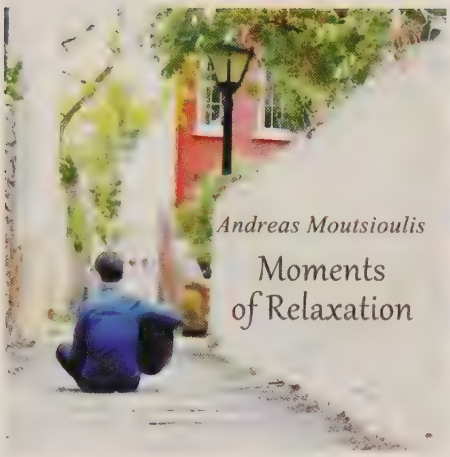
Steve Cowan
stevecowanmusic.com

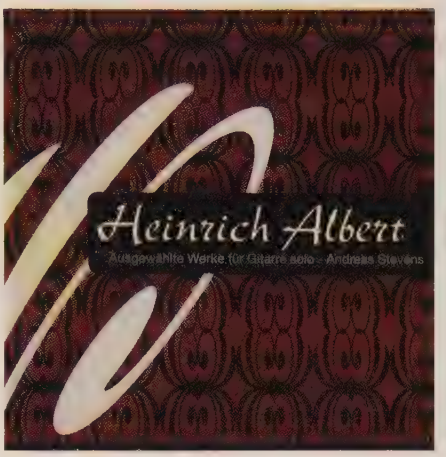
Canadian composers embrace modern approaches in varied set

Cowan is one of Canada's top contemporary classical guitarists and this time out he's made a bracing CD consisting of eight pieces by Canadian composers, including himself: five for solo guitar, two for guitar duo (Cowan and François Bergeron), and one for guitar and (seriously strange) elec tronics. Most of it is in a modern idiom, angular and with considerable dissonance, unpredictable rhythms, and unusual melodies. This music does not seek to embrace the listener; rather the intent seems to be challenge and provoke. For instance, the author of the three-part *Dreaded Sea Voyage* (the guitar-and-electronics piece), Andrew Staniland, describes his quite bizarre work as "bombastic, relentless, and panic-inducing." François Bergeron hopes the music for his *L'Ineffable secret des images rupestres* ("The ineffable secret of cave paintings") communicates "a deep sense of struggle and uncertainty." Indeed, musical tension always seems to be around the next corner, manifested in sharp, rhythmically irregular jabs, slashing strums, and off-kilter melodic choices.

That said, there is an admirable underlying consistency to the disc that, despite the multiplicity of composers, makes it feel almost like it is the work of just one writer, refracted through a prism, its abstract points of light illuminating different aspects of, perhaps, the "ineffable" and confounding landscape of human emotions. This may not be everyone's cup of tea, but those with a taste for uncompromising modern guitar music will certainly find much of interest and value here.

—BJ





Moments of Relaxation
Andreas Moutsioulis
andreas-moutsioulis.com

York, Assad, and more in varied recital

This is a modestly packaged private release by a Greek guitarist based in England. Apart from the pleasing quirk of placing *Farewell* by Sergio Assad at the start of proceedings, Moutsioulis treads a conventional pathway in which the choice of material is mostly familiar and always light-to-middleweight. The performer even uses the term "easy listening" in his preface. The once ubiquitous *Milonga* by Jorge Cardoso is present, as is *Un Dia de Noviembre* by Leo Brouwer. There might be some raised eyebrows in certain quarters over the inclusion of the anonymous *Spanish Romance* once attributed to Narciso Yepes, but let it never be forgotten that this remains one of the best-loved guitar miniatures of the modern era and has yet to be discovered by many newcomers to the instrument. When did you last hear it on a newly-minted CD?

All's well on the playing front, the experience further enhanced by a particularly warm sound capture. Tempos can be a little leisurely, most notably in *Valseana* by Sergio Assad, and the Miguel Llobet evergreen *El Testament d'Amelia,* although this is never excessive.

Also worthy of mention is the inclusion of four pieces by Andrew York, making him the most featured composer. Although I've witnessed York in action on numerous occasions, it's some considerable time since we met on British soil. The neat and concise York set presented by Andreas Moutsioulis serves as a timely reminder of what my compatriots and I have been missing.

—PF

Heinrich Albert: Ausgewahlte Werke fur Gitarre solo

Anton Stingl: Ausgewahlte Werke fur Gitarre Solo
Andreas Steven
Aurea Vox

German composers deserve to be heard more

To many of the current guitar fraternity, Heinrich Albert (1870–1950) may, at best, just be a name in the history books, as his work is not widely played today. But in the 1920s, and for some years after, his music was an integral part of many German guitarists' repertoire. Here, played by German guitarist and musicologist Andreas Stevens, we find a small selection (22 pieces) from his vast oeuvre, mostly modest in scale and largely sounding harmonically like Tárrega and Mertz—in other words, a late-Romantic writer. The pieces range from the simply styled *Menuett in G Dur*, to the more overtly technical wizardry of *Am Springbrunnen*. All is nicely recorded and performed.

The other CD from Stevens covers Anton Stingl (1908–2000) who lived to be 92 and produced a great deal of worthwhile music, some of it based often on popular song, as evidenced by this disc's charming and original *Sonatine Op. 15 nach Kinderliedern (1936).* Here, the children's themes are delightfully introduced over four movements, and it makes me wonder why this piece is not played more often. Similarly, the *Zwei Satze zu einem mahrischen Wiegenlied* are wonderful creations based on a lullaby. *Praludium and Tango Op. 9* is also much fun, and there is much more besides, all worth hearing (and playing!).

—CD

J.S. Bach French Suites
Urs Guntensperger
Swiss Pan

Lots of Bach on a 10-string

The title should read "French Suites (And Others)," as there are full versions of the *Suites No. 1 (BWV 812)* and *5 (BWV 816)*, but also the *Third Lute Suite BWV 995*, the *Prelude Fugue and Allegro BWV 998*, and the first of the *6 Little Preludes (BWV 933)*, making for a very full 79-and-a-half minutes of Bach.

The extra-large range of Guntersperger's 10-string makes for a wonderful sound, and the recording is clear and not too close. The lute pieces (BWV 993 and 8) have, of course, been recorded many times before, but the added basses produce quite a different sound in a number of places, noticeable to those people accustomed to the usual six strings.

The French Suites are something else, and to my knowledge have not been attempted solo before, although some pieces have appeared over the years on two guitars. Here, Guntersperger manages to make a thoroughly respectable job of the many layers in each of the movements, and they work really well, providing you don't expect some movements to be quite as brisk as they might be played on a keyboard (the "Allemande" from *Suite No. 5* being one case in point). Don't misunderstand me—they are fine performances, but I missed a little of the lightness of touch associated with one or two faster tempi.

Apart from that one proviso, the recital is full of wonderful Bach, and as such I am convinced that you might find it a worthwhile purchase.

—CD

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Alexander Borodin

APPEALING WORK BY RUSSIAN ROMANTIC

by Derek Hasted

Petite Suite (for 3 guitars)
Alexander Borodin, arr. Adrian Andrei
Les Productions D'Oz, 14 pp. plus parts

With "excerpts" in parentheses, the foreword to this work by Russian Romantic composer Alexander Borodin (1833–1887), written for piano and published in 1885, states this is a three-movement subset of the original six-movement suite, but a quick visit to YouTube finds eight movements.

We open with *Serenade* (originally movement six), and this is set in D rather than the original's D♭. This works particularly well on guitar, and much of the trio is faithful to the original. Just 43 measures long, this is strongly melodic with a rhythmic accompaniment that fits guitar so well.

Next is *Nocturne* (originally the seventh movement) in G (rather than G♭), but don't get too excited—there is a key-change to F♯ major and the reading will be tricky for an intermediate player (for whom it's intended), as some of the double-stopping looks very easy, when actually the E is sharp. But we are soon back in a comfortable key, and again some of Borodin's constructs fit the guitar like a glove.

Mazurka was originally movement three and concludes this reduced suite. Here we've gone from the key of C to D. This is brisk, but the arrangement is light and easy to play quickly.

This all works very well and I would predict the music has first-time appeal to an audience—so important when presenting less-familiar works. Recommended. **CG**

Valzer and *Canzone*

Giuseppe Torrisi
Les Productions D'Oz, 6 and 7 pp. respectively

Engaging Sicilian-style waltz and tremolo outings

These are the first two movements from the three-movement *Suite Siciliana* from an Italian composer whose works are many and varied in style. It is slightly unusual that the three movements are published separately.

Valzer is marked "appassionato" and is largely in three voices, but never resorts to the bass and two-chords style that often passes for a waltz on a guitar, as the part-writing is interesting from the start and there is always one or another of the parts moving around the basic beat. Some of the fingering changes are not easy to achieve and as a result, the difficulty factor is intermediate-advanced. The harmonic work can be acerbic or melancholy in places, but always melodic, beginning in E minor, leading to a central section in A minor, and a final section in D, although the number of accidentals throughout this work show you that this is not simple in its harmonic style at all. That said, this is a fine movement, and its friendly but unexpected harmonies and passagework add to its appeal.

The *Canzone* is a tremolo work and thus requires an even tremolo for the top-voiced melody, which does extend up to the 17th fret in places.

Both are very interesting and challenging pieces and, assuming that the final movement, *Tarantella* (available from the publisher, but not submitted for review), is as good as the preceding two, then this suite would be a fine concert work for any interested player. —*Chis Dumigan*

Sevillana (for 4 guitars)

Edward Elgar, arr. Carl Herring
Doberman/Yppan, 14 pp. plus parts

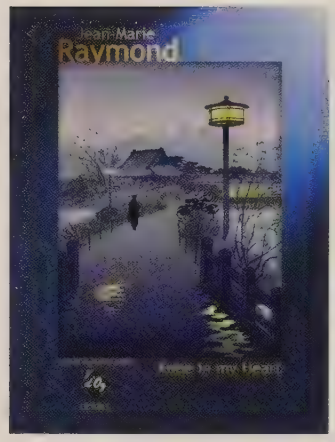
Spanish-flavored piece is fine for guitar quartet

This charming piece can be seen on YouTube performed by England's Tetra Guitar Quartet, of which arranger Carl Herring was a member. (Stephen Goss is perhaps the best-known Tetra alumnus.) And that makes the job of reviewing this piece a little easier, because my task is simply to guide you on the complexity of the arrangement so that you can see whether it is performable by your quartet or ensemble. The piece derives from an 1884 orchestral work by English composer Edward Elgar (1857–1934), more fully titled *Sevillaña (Scène Espagnole)*.

Set in E minor and E major, with Guitar Four tuned down to D for what, as far as I can see, is just a pair of bottom Ds, the music is fast, rather than complicated. The part scores are very easy on the eye, and all the parts have two page-turns that are in periods of silence, so playing from score is not going to be fraught with chaos. Fingering is sparse, but where present, it includes left hand, right hand, and string numbers. One or two of the fingerings are ambiguous, but a quick position marking with a pencil will get all that sorted.

This is certainly accessible to a competent quartet, though the wonderful clarity and ease that you will hear on YouTube might prove a little elusive to a less-skilled ensemble. Performance techniques are clearly marked and there is nothing one would regard as out of the ordinary. This piece really sounds good on guitar!

—*DH*



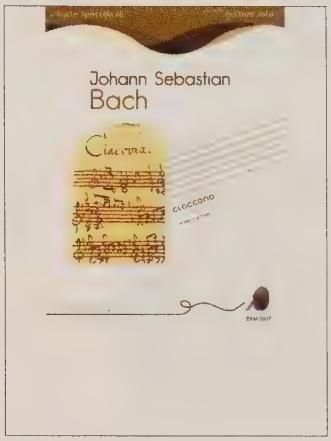
Kobe in My Heart

Jean-Marie Raymond
Les Productions D'Oz, 7 pp.

Another lovely work from French composer

Here is a French composer whose works are always worth playing, and this is no exception. Following a *tranquillo* opening of eight bars in the friendly key of A major, it launches into a catchy gavotte with an uplifting feel. However, it goes around the entire fingerboard in the top voice, so it is not very easy. Moreover, there are several places where block chordal ideas interchange with swiftly changing melody lines. This leads to a brief pause on the dominant 7th and then melds into a middle section in D minor consisting of a *valse tendre* that is very melancholic, with an appealing grace and a beautiful set of harmonies. This extended section is mostly a bass/chord waltz in the classic style, with several places where a third middle voice enters, or occasionally has its own quick melodic runs. This then pauses and the gavotte re-enters one more time, leading to a short, gentle coda.

This is a lovely work that many will enjoy playing. It is not too difficult (it's listed as "intermediate")—the hardest parts are the sudden position changes in one or two places and the idiomatic way the composer occasionally uses a harmonic amid fretted notes, which could create one or two awkward moments for the less skilled. That said, this is a wonderful addition to Raymond's oeuvre, and any interested parties do well to look at the extended list of his pieces published by D'Oz. —*CD*



Ciaconna

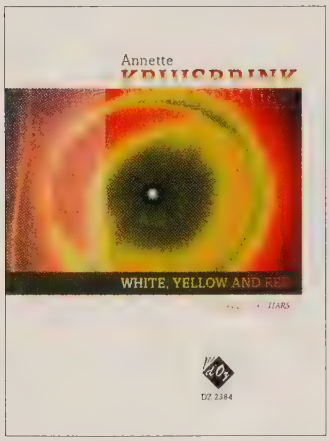
J. S. Bach, arr. by *Alberto Ponce*
Editions l'Empreinte Melodique, 20 pp.

Arrangement is unnecessarily faithful to violin score

There was a time when Bach's justifiably famous *Chaconne* (the fifth movement from *Violin Partita No. 2 BWV 1004*) was the "Everest' for all aspiring guitarists. It is a very long movement—it usually takes 15 minutes or more to play—and it requires much from the guitarist to capture its varied themes and moods. Nowadays, there are works that are far more difficult for players, but the *Chaconne* is still a major challenge for any guitarist, and it remains a true masterpiece in the history of musical composition.

This recent transcription by world-renowned guitarist and teacher Alberto Ponce (b.1935) sticks as faithfully as possible to the original violin score, and this throws up a few small (but technically significant) left-hand difficulties not encountered in other published versions, such as those by Andrés Segovia, who premiered his arrangement in 1935 and helped popularize the piece among guitarists. This aside, this presentation is quite satisfactory but because of the seemingly limitless resources available these days, I would imagine many high-grade players would likely wish to create their own their own version.

The presentation is readable enough, but visually the score appears somewhat uninviting, due to the stark contrast of the very white background the music is printed on, and the overabundance of left-hand fingering, which is unnecessary in many places. —*Steve Marsh*



White, Yellow and Red (for 3 guitars)

Annette Kruisbrink
Productions D'Oz, 6 pp. plus parts

"Easy" piece boasts interesting rhythms for guitar trio

Set in three movements that run end-to-end, this is a rhythmically fascinating piece, but the program notes are sadly all about the composer and nothing about the music. (Annette Kruisbrink is Dutch, b. 1958.) The piece, listed as "easy" by the publisher, sees the three forces in the title broadly having their own range of pitches, with Guitar Three providing the bass, and Guitar One the higher notes. But the parts cross and share motifs here and there to add variety.

"White" pits 3/4 against 6/8 time, with the individual parts tending to stay in one meter for an entire phrase, but both time signatures are always present. The movement is all in the first two positions and the selection of strummed chords use simple and comfortable shapes. "Yellow" is in 4/4 with more performance tricks—tone changes, harmonics, bent notes and a more somber overall mood. Although there are 16th notes, they are either slurred or have notes repeated, so that only one hand is working at full speed at any one time. "Red" is a little more complex, reverting to the rhythm patterns of "White" but with a more strident melody and adding percussion and tambora effects.

There is no fingering, but everything is self-evident. The dynamics and articulation are clearly shown. The piece would suit an ensemble of modest ability, but perhaps a conductor might be helpful in binding together the contrasting rhythms. —*DH*

Prelude et Toccata

Arnaud Dumond
Editions Lemoine, 15 pp.

Fireworks and more in confusingly notated work

This pair of pieces by the very prolific French composer (b. 1950) has an unusual scordatura of tuning the 4th string up to an E and the 3rd string down to the F (only a semitone above the lower string), which proves to be a considerable disadvantage when trying to read it. This decision was surely taken because the Prelude in particular has a rocking E–F motif throughout, which now proves to be on open strings. There is a plaintive melody above and some gently dissonant work going on below. The Toccata is written on two staves—a little like Domenici's *Koyunbaba*—where on the lower stave you play the piece as if it is tab—namely, you get a D and a G written for the 3rd and 4th strings, but actually hear and E and an F, while the upper stave shows you what you actually hear.

Now, some people can work with this, but I'm not one of them. I rely on the music I am seeing to sound like it should, as I can picture this in my mind *before* I play, and getting a different answer to what I am visually expecting is confusing. That said, musically the Toccata is an extended piece full of fast finger-work and plenty of instrumental fireworks running over the entire fingerboard, and anyone who fancies the sound of this piece and can manage the above visual/audio problems, and has a thorough and advanced technique, will get much from it. —*CD*

Séquences en "Kit" Vol. 3 (for guitar ensemble)

Luc Lévesque
Les Productions D'Oz , 23 pp. plus parts

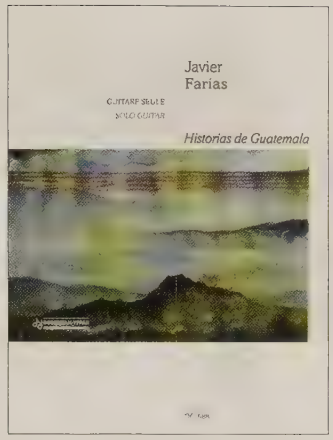
A great teaching resource, with a catch

We have already reviewed earlier volumes of this novel series by the Canadian guitarist/lutenist. How the edition can be used is described only in French, but even my rusty "schoolboy French" found it easy to understand. Set for up to six different guitars (or other melody instruments) and two percussion lines, one of which might benefit from two players, each sequence can be repeated, layering on more parts at each new iteration (there is an example in the foreword). A conductor might be needed to ensure that order does not descend into chaos.

There are six sequences in this volume: Blues, "Noire," Flamenco (which does not involve strumming), Milonga, Ballade, and "Guitar" (which has a sort-of-calypso feel). There are but one or two chords in the entire volume, so other musicians (such as violin or other non-transposing instruments) will find most of the lines playable, too.

The cover is marked "non-reproducible material" (unlike the first two volumes). The edition does not say whether more part scores are available, but the publisher's website suggests not—in which case this volume is going to be useless in schools, as it will force the teacher to restrict the number of players who can participate. I don't understand this change, and I struggle to see how it benefits anyone.

It would be a great teaching resource for schools, but unlike volumes one and two, it's very difficult to see how to make effective use of it. *—DH*



Historias de Guatemala

Javier Farias
Dobermann-Yppan, 15 pp.

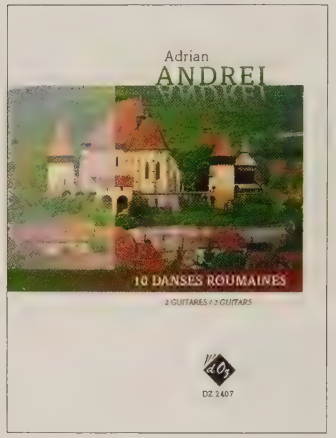
Blustering work underwhelms critic

Chilean composer Javier Farias (b. 1973) has written over 60 works for many combinations of instruments, but this is actually the first I have come across. Set in four movements, it is one part of a tribute to six Latin American writers who received the Nobel Prize for Literature (*Seis miradas por Latinoamérica*)—this one celebrates Guatemalan poet and writer Miguel Angel Asturias.

The opening "Extasis de Tropico" has dropped-D tuning and consists entirely of arpeggiated 16th-notes carefully placed in combinations to deliberately create harmonic clashes. The lack of a contrasting middle idea feels like a miscalculation, however, as it lacks variety. "Asi Pensaba Gaspar" is in contrasting time signatures involving 16ths, and at its frenetic pace is quite a handful, as well.

"El Arbor Que Anda" is slower and has a dropped-C♯ 6th-string. There is a rocking pair of notes that act as a motif throughout the majority of its duration. Finally, we get "Roja Extremidad," with the 6th dropped to C and more than a hint of the opening movement, with its clashing arpeggiated 16ths, and closes with a repeat and fade ending.

I was disappointed with this work, as it seemed to be more bluster than actual melodic conception. Then again, you may think entirely differently and already love this composer's works, in which case I will just say that it is difficult to play and requires a mature technique to do it justice. *—CD*



10 Danses Roumaines (for 2 guitars)

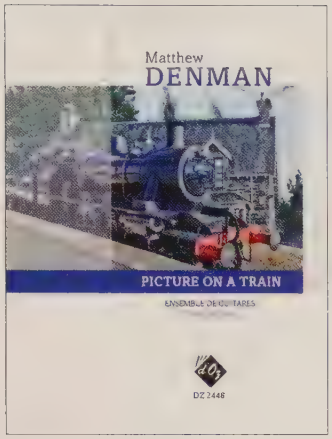
Adrian Andrei
Les Productions D'Oz; 19 pages score only

A mixed set of new Romanian folk dances

I have always enjoyed Romanian composer Adrian Andrei's works (and there are many of them available from D'Oz and elsewhere), as their modal scales and slightly unexpected harmonies make for attractive playing and listening. As I am well-acquainted with Béla Bartók's *For Children* set that makes use of folk songs, as this Andrei set does, I anticipated the end-result being somewhat similar, as at first glance they both consist of short and succinct little pieces heavily influenced by modal harmonies.

The ten dances here are of only moderate difficulty (D'Oz labels it "intermediate") and range from the lento *Ronde des Dobrogea*, to the 5/4 *Danse des Aieux*, and the 7/8 *Danse des Couples du Sud De La Transylvanie*, but be prepared from some unusual fingerings and unexpected syncopations along the way, as Romanian folk melodies can be unpredictable.

In general I found the collection pleasant, and some of the dances quite entertaining, but there were a few that got a bit bogged down by their settings, which didn't always show them in their best light, in my estimation. Furthermore, I felt that they suffered in comparison to the Bartok pieces, which remain a prime example of how to harmonize folk melodies and display their unique features. I didn't feel this set was quite as successful as a whole, though parts of it are undoubtedly are. *—CD*



Picture on a Train (for guitar ensemble)

Matthew Denman
Productions D'Oz, 24 pp. plus parts

Evocative "story" about strangers on a train

As the Director of Education for the GFA and Director of Guitar Studies for Oklahoma City University, Matthew Denman is someone who has demonstrated that he's keen on guitar ensembles. In this piece, scored for guitar quartet, Guitars One and Four have a "divisi" section, so a larger ensemble is ideally needed. This is a substantial work, but all the part scores have well-chosen page turns.

The score tells a story: there's mist, a train, its whistle, and then we meet Passenger 1, and the effect that the titular "picture" has on each character. Passenger 2 is nervous and the picture reminds them of an unpleasant memory. Passenger 3 receives a spiritual awakening from the picture and there is a conversation about art. The piece concludes with the performance marking "Three passengers having three different experiences because of one picture on a train." All of these ideas are to be evoked by Denman's score.

This piece requires an ensemble with quite strong technical ability, but rhythmically the motion of the train acts to bind the parts tightly together, so this may actually come together more readily than some easier pieces where the parts do not interlock.

There are some videos of this on YouTube and you will perhaps hear that some players are not quite up to the task, but I feel a good ensemble could make magic out of this "intermediate" piece.

—DH

Naokolo (for guitar orchestra)

Dusan Bogdanovic
Doberman-Yppan 20 pp. plus parts

Challenging but rewarding workout for multiple guitars

Subtitled *(Around Dance)*, this piece by the prolific and diverse Yugoslavia-born composer/guitarist was commissioned by the Boston Classical Guitar Society and is scored for five guitars and a bass part that is presented in both treble and bass clefs. The four movements are "Introduction," "Kolo," "Fugue," and "Choral."

"Introduction" has Guitar One and Guitar Two play a thread that is improvisatory in feel. The rhythms are challenging and not for the faint-hearted. With many rests and changes of time signature it will be difficult at first to keep the parts in step. "Kolo" is a delightful and gentle piece with decorative trills and solo and tutti sections. The thematic material is handed around to all except the bass part, and although the rhythms are varied, they lock together very well. Some of the parts have chords, and while there is no fingering and the chords have a mixture of stopped and open strings, they are comfortable under the fingers.

"Fugue" is only in four parts, and guitars Four and Five have parts marked "Tacet" (which means "it is silent" in Latin). It contains one or two awkward entries but on the whole is very pleasing. "Choral" has a much more challenging bass part, underpinning a rubato melody and tremolo-style accompaniment.

All in all, this "advanced" piece would be a challenging work for an amateur ensemble, but the music is quite rewarding.

—DH

Ondinas de Alma

Alain Verite
Editions L'Empreinte Melodique, 20 pp

Rewarding intermediate pieces in several styles

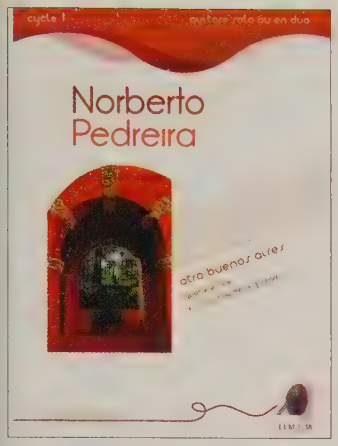
This small collection of six student pieces from the French guitarist Alain Verite is a very pleasant affair and should reward the intermediate player with some delightfully musical guitar solos, as well as furthering the technical development of arpeggios, working in high positions, barre chords and melody projection, to name a few techniques.

The collection begins with *Yannick' Song,* one of those late-night, moody pieces where a strong melody line is played over lush chords. The following *Quintabile* is a quirky little rhythmic piece, which, as the French title suggests, is in 5/8 and is a great introduction to the student who has never ventured into that time.

Another piece with a very prominent melody line is *Rumbarinho Melancolico*, a slow and freely-played composition that hints at the Latin American style. The next one, *Night and Dreams,* consists of arpeggios mixed with open strings played in various positions of the fingerboard, with the resulting *campanella* effect being perhaps its main attribute. This, for me, is the weak link in the collection—the piece outstaying its welcome by quite a number of bars.

However, the highlight of the book comes with *Pavabanera*, a lovely, expressive composition with shades of the Cuban *habanera* style, and a tune that stays with you afterwards. The collection concludes with *Sor'tilege*, another melodic piece in a waltz style quite reminiscent of the music of Klenjans.

—SM



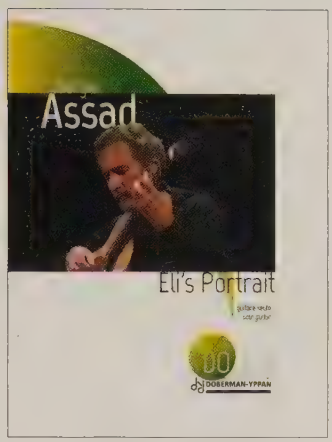
Otro Buenos Aires: Quatre Etudes (for 1 or 2 guitars)

Norberto Pedreira
Editions L'Empreinte Melodique, 20 pp.

Slight Latin pieces work best as duets

This is the first time I have come across the works of this Argentinean composer who has many works to his credit with a number of publishers. The format here is that there are four duets, printed as scores (*Tio Jorge*, *Gotitas de Luvia*, *Petit Tango Parisien*, and *Paris en las Calles*) with a separate copy of the first guitar part, which doubles as a solo study and therefore could stand alone as a solo. Therein lies the problem: The four solo pieces themselves are very short—less than two minutes each—and are rather predictable in their musical journeys. They are aimed at the beginning player, but why they are considered "Etudes" is a puzzle, as they betray no special technical problems, unless the composer is dealing with basic Latin styles of harmony and rhythms. They are pleasant, but no more, and the entire set is over and done in a little over five minutes. Nevertheless if the aim is to introduce beginners to some Latin elements then these manage the job reasonably well.

The duet versions are identical in length, as the second part is simply an addition to the already mentioned "solo" versions. The duet part does enliven the whole setup a fair deal, and frankly they make a more interesting option played like that, and in that guise would make a nice little set for the end-of-term concert. But they probably aren't substantial enough to be anything more. —*CD*



Eli's Portrait

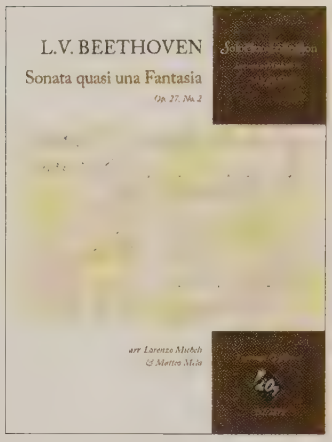
Sergio Assad
Dobermann-Yppan, 8 pp

A lovely tribute to Canadian guitar giant

Apparently, this is the first "portrait" in a series of that will pay homage to illustrious guitar personalities of our time. Assad composed *Eli's Portrait* to celebrate the 80th birthday of Eli Kassner, the beloved and influential Canadian guitar teacher (and one of the original classical guitar festival promoters). Sergio Assad has chosen to compose the work based upon Kassner's name, so using the alphabetical system of music notation in a recurring "loop," Eli Kassner's name comes out as EEB DAEEGED. This has all been done before of course, the most well-known being the *Tonadilla upon the name of Andres Segovia* by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Tedesco composed several pieces in this method, and it just so happened that Segovia's name produced the best theme. Assad has struck lucky here also, as the recurring short theme based on Kassner's name is memorable and attractive.

The opening segment of the work has a slow, lyrical, and poignant character that makes it instantly likeable, and it is at the end of this section that we first encounter the Kassner "theme." The mid-section livens up with flights of scales and arpeggios, above which snippets of the theme and related motifs also appear. After this comes a recapitulation of the opening slow section, before the work concludes with a tender and emotive short coda.

The technical standard is about Grade 8/advanced. —*SM*



Sonata Quasi Una Fantasia Op. 27 No. 2 (for 2 guitars)

Ludwig van Beethoven,
arr. by Lorenzo Micheli and Matteo Mela
Les Productions D'Oz, 23 pp. plus parts

'Moonlight Sonata' in a difficult translation

The music of one of our greatest piano composers is not usually heard on guitars, for the very good reason that it is so pianistic. This is the entire 1801 piano work popularly known as the "Moonlight Sonata" taken up a semitone from its original C♯ minor to D minor, using dropped-D 6th-strings on both guitars. The million dollar question is: how does it sound?

The first movement fares reasonably well, with the triplet arpeggio pattern being passed from one player to another throughout. However, I miss the gravitas of the low basses. The middle movement is the best of the three, as its gentle, lilting three-in-the-bar is perhaps the least pianistic and therefore the most successful. The final *presto agitato* is another story entirely. Many of the moments work surprisingly well—even the opening three-and-a-half octave arpeggio run up the fingerboard, as it is shared between the two players. But many other sections just feel awkward. The final minute or so, which includes the 32nd-note and split-octave runs and a cadenza-like passage, just sound forced.

I feel it all comes down to whether in the end the work sounds like it suits the guitars and doesn't seem to be the poor relation to the piano original. Because in the final analysis, piano works need to sound utterly natural when transferred to other instruments, guitars included, and regrettably, this one doesn't. —*CD*

AN ADVENTUROUS EVENING IN SAN FRANCISCO

Marcin Dylla, David Tanenbaum, Marc Teicholz, and Lawrence Ferrara shine in a mostly modern showcase by Jeff Kaliss

Would that they had recorded the "50 Oak Street: Masters of the Guitar" concert presented at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco, last November 19. It could well have served as an irresistible recruitment tool for the Guitar Department of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music—not that that renowned assemblage of teachers and students doesn't already enjoy widespread approbation.

The four performers showcased in the attractive and acoustically-responsive sacred setting of St. Mark's all bore a bond to the Conservatory, which is situated at the titular street address. David Tanenbaum is chair of the Guitar Department; Lawrence Ferrara and Marc Teicholz are faculty; and the Polish-born Marcin Dylla served last semester as the department's first artist-in-residence and as a guest lecturer. The concert was part of the Omni Foundation for the Performing Arts' ongoing Dynamite Guitars season. Omni's director, Richard Patterson, welcomed the audience in from "kind of a stormy night" to witness "four gentlemen who've dedicated their lives to this wonderful instrument."

The program proved delightfully diverse, the players themselves different in approach but consistently fine. Lawrence Ferrera started the evening in a lovely, restrained mode. Using a 1995 Greg Smallman guitar, he channeled neither the macho of the composer of *Adiós Nonino* (Astor Piazzolla) nor the syncopation suggested by the title of Dusan Bogdanovic's *Jazz Sonata*. Nevertheless he conveyed the respective harmonic intent and Iberian pulse of those two pieces—he nicely encompassed the treble and bass interplay deployed among a quartet in Piazzolla's own performances. Ferrera's set also served up the aural bouquet of Egberto Gismonti's *Palhaço*, and a charming minuet from Jean-Philippe Rameau, which somehow seemed to prefigure, by a couple of centuries, the cantabile tendency of several Latin American composers.

With his 2010 Stephan Connor guitar, Marc Teicholz presented his own breathtaking transcription of Robert Schumann's *Kinderscenen*. Unintentionally, Teicholz engendered the proposition that some of these scenes from a child's life actually sound more affecting on guitar than they do on the piano for which they were written. The guitarist's style and personal appearance, and his apparent pleasure in performance, also evoked both the composer's subject matter and his relative youthfulness at the time of this composition (Schumann was 28). The 13 sketches were conveyed with clear intonation, unaffected emotionality, sweet nostalgia, and patient pacing. Many of the individual sections were familiar to the audience, yet somehow the instrumental transcription seemed to render them more hummable. Teicholz did a remarkable job of trans-

MATTHEW WASHBURN PHOTO

Left to right: Ferrara, Teicholz, Tanenbaum, Dylla

planting the piece's bass-treble separation from the keyboard to the fretboard.

David Tanenbaum premiered compositions by Conservatory colleague Sérgio Assad and Yale's Aaron Jay Kernis, and chose a 2013 piece by Peppino D'Agostino, who was present in the audience. All three of these pieces were written for Tanenbaum, who performed them on a 2012 Stephan Connor. Assad's *Shadows and Light* etude evoked Segovia, but drew on Tanenbaum's innovative modernist technique, involving, among other elements, series of overtones and plucking with the fretting hand. The guitar was retuned for Kernis' *Soliloquy*, created in a futuristic architecture displaying both high and low ends of the instrument's registers. D'Agostino's *Penumbra* seemed the most traditionally classical of the pieces; both composer and player spanning centuries and continents of the guitar's history, telling some familiar melodic stories, but with unexpected twists and turns. Tanenbaum alerted listeners to his mastery in sounding and savoring tones, and assured that any contemporary composer could totally trust this man to find and reveal the feeling of any new contribution to the guitar repertoire.

Dylla, who'd previously been presented by Omni in 2004 and 2015, performed his set on a 1948 Hauser I, borrowed from the Harris Guitar Collection, the source of a rotating display of classic instruments on the Conservatory's mezzanine level. (Founder L. John Harris was in the audience.) For this concert, Dylla played the eight-part *Nocturnal After John Dowland*, imagined by composer Benjamin Britten as variations on "Come, Heavy Sleep" from the Renaissance composer's *First Book of Songs*. The Hauser's eager, distinct, resinous tone was ideally suited to the artfulness of both composers, as well as to the precise approach of the player and the intimate acoustics of the venue. As with his approach to Purcell in the *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Britten's capacity to inhabit the work of an earlier Briton without submerging his own charming idiosyncrasies was apparent here, and clearly enjoyed and celebrated by Dylla, whose dynamics were faultless. The final "Passacaglia" section delightfully resolved to the historical source, delivered by Dylla with period perfection.

All four performers then convened in two movements of Federico Moreno Torroba's *Estampas* quartet, from 1979. Dylla, who recently completed a recording using four of the Harris Collection's instruments, exchanged the Hauser for his own 2015 Gabriele Lodi in this final selection. The fugal exchange, in a warm and collaborative spirit, enhanced by Iberian folksiness and joyful harmonies, served as a much-appreciated encore and as a showpiece for the collective virtuosity of the Conservatory's faculty. **CG**

LUCERO LC235SCE

An inspiring companion, low-priced Lucero exceeds expectations

by Adam Perlmutter

I'm a bit of an instrument snob, so I didn't have the highest expectations when I removed the Lucero LC235SCE from its shipping box. At first blush, the guitar, with its cutaway and laminated back and sides, not to mention its East Asian import status, appeared to be a long ways from a fine concert instrument.

But after spending a few minutes with the Lucero, it's obvious that this a winner in its class. The guitar has a smooth playability and a warm, round voice and sits on top of Lucero's lineup available exclusively from Guitar Center, Musician's Friend, and Music & Arts. Together with its nonstandard appearance, the LC235SCE would be an inspiring companion for learning the classical literature—and more.

LOOKING GOOD

The LC235SCE is an upgraded version of Lucero's LC230S, adding a Venetian cutaway, swapping bubinga back and sides for zebrawood, and adding an electronics package by Fishman.

In some key ways, the LC235SCE is traditional. It's got a solid red cedar top, a 12th-fret neck junction, a slotted headstock, and a 49-millimeter nut. But the zebrawood, cutaway, and electronics all depart from the established template, and the neck's scale length, 25 3/4-inches, works out to 653 millimeters.

The Lucero is a nice-looking instrument—a marked improvement on the stereotypically staid "budget" option. Its cedar top has a warm red glow, and the zebrawood's dramatic grains cut a striking figure. An all-wood rosette adds classy detailing, as does the rosewood binding, headstock faceplate, and heel cap.

Overall, the guitar feels solid and well built. Things are clean on the interior surfaces; there are no glue jobs, rough braces, or other evidence of manufacturing shortcuts. Outside, the glossy polyurethane finish is thin and evenly buffed, and the binding work is similarly tidy. The fretwork is also good, though the fret ends could have dressed a little better.

THE FEEL AND SOUND

The LC235SCE was set up at Lucero's North American headquarters and it's a breeze to play. The action is low and comfortable on the relatively shallow neck.

For an inexpensive guitar, not to mention one having a cutaway, the LC235SCE has good volume and projection. Its sound is nicely balanced between the registers, with taut bass notes matched by sturdy trebles. I get a hint of fret buzzing when I really dig in on the lower strings, but the guitar's truss rod will allow you to adjust the neck to suit your playing style.

It feels inspiring to play through studies by Mauro Giuliani and by Matteo Carcassi on the LC235SCE—much more so than on the entry-level instrument I played as a student in the 1980s. The guitar is responsive to fretting- and picking-hands nuances, and its tonal warmth makes these studies feel very musical.

In a different direction, I tried some bossa-nova comping and solo arrangements on the LC235SCE. Thanks to its clarity, complex jazz harmonies sound vibrant on the guitar, and I can clearly hear the individual members of chords. The bass notes in this setting are strong, but not so much that they overwhelm the higher notes, which sound clear and crisp.

Of course, many classical guitarists would be scandalized by using electronics in the concert hall, so the Fishman system on the LC235SCE can be considered a bonus. This package includes an under-saddle Sonicore pickup and a Clásica III preamp, which Fishman designed specifically nylon-string guitars. The Clásica III includes volume, three-band EQ, plus phase (for attenuating feedback) and a built-in tuner.

Plugged into a Fender Acoustasonic combo, the LC235SCE sounds reasonably realistic—again not something you'd use on a student recital, but great for exploring fare outside of the classical literature, and potentially for experimenting with electronic effects like delays and reverbs.

At $399.99, the Lucero LC235SCE costs a fraction of the price of a serious concert instrument, but its smooth playability and attractive sound make it enjoyable to play. All in all, it's a very nice instrument that will give student guitarists plenty of room to grow and explore. CG

LUCERO LC235SCE AT A GLANCE

BODY Solid red cedar soundboard; laminated zebrawood back and sides; Venetian cutaway; natural gloss finish
NECK Mahogany neck with Indian rosewood fretboard; 653 mm (25.75-inch) scale length; 49 mm nut; chrome open-gear tuners
ELECTRONICS Fishman Sonicore pickup and Clásica III preamp **EXTRAS** D'Addario Pro-Arté nylon strings
PRICE $399.99 street Made in China. luceroguitars.com

FESTIVALS & COMPETITIONS

Michael Partington will be at the Northwest Guitar Festival in Portland, Oregon, April 7–9

FEBRUARY 20–26
Miami International GuitART Festival and Composition Competition
Miami, Florida
The MIGF festival, at Florida International University's School of Music, features performances, master classes, lectures, a luthier's expo, composer's panel, and a composer's competition. Concert participants include Muriel Anderson, Celso Cano, Evan Hirschelman, Celil Refik Kaya, festival founder and artistic director Mesut Ozgen, the Mircotonal Guitar Duo, and others. **migf.fiu.edu**

MARCH 6–10
17th International Guitar Festival
Culiacan, Mexico
Five days of concerts, master classes, competition, and more in this historic northwestern city in Mexico's Sinaloa state. Artists include Michael Chapdelaine, Martha Masters, Anna Likhacheva, and Ossla with Pedro Villegas. **internationalguitarculiacan.com**

MARCH 22–25
18th Concours International de Guitare
Antony, France
All-ages and -nationalities competitions. A new piece written for the competition will be featured (among others). Last year's was written Atanas Ourkouzounov. **ville-antony.fr/international-guitar-competition**

MARCH 24–26
Guitares Au Beffroi International Festival
Montrouge, France
March 24 is the classical guitar day of this festival held in a Paris suburb, with the final round of *Guitare Classique* magazine's

competition and a special tribute concert titled "In the Footsteps of Roland Dyens" (who was originally booked for the fest). Among the guitarists paying homage to Dyens' legacy are Gérard Abiton, Laurent Boutros, Tania Chagnot, Arnaud Dumond, Valérie Duchâteau, Raphaël Fays, Marylise Floridand, and Judicaël Perroy. **guitaresaubeffroi.com**

APRIL 2–9
Long Island Guitar Festival
Brookville, NY
The 25th LIGF (!) takes place on the campus of Long Island University's Post campus and will feature concerts by David Leisner, Huy Thanh Nguyen, Raphaella Smits, Benjamin Verdery, Ana Vidovic, Gohar Vardanyan, the Saigon Guitar Quartet, and VIDA Guitar Quartet. Also, master classes, the National High School Classical Guitar Competition, guitar orchestra, ensemble showcase, and more. **liu.edu/gfest**

APRIL 7–9
Northwest Guitar Festival
Portland, Oregon
Three days at Portland State University's School of Music, with artists including Elizabeth Brown, Hilary Field, Scott Kritzer, Michael LeFevre, Michael Partington, and more. Adult and youth competitions, guitar orchestra workshops and concert, master classes, luthier fair, and more. **northwestguitarfestival.org**

APRIL 8–9
Philadelphia Classical Guitar Society Competition
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
David Russell plays the opening concert and gives a master class. Also, adult (under 30) and high school competitions; workshops; vendor fair featuring luthiers, composers, and sheet music sellers; and more. Closing concert is by Jordan Dodson. **phillyguitar.org**

APRIL 11
19th Ivor Mairants Guitar Award
London, England
Applications for this year's competition are due February 26. Requirements this year include any work or movement from *Jazz Sonatas for Guitar* (Mel Bay) and one of six selected pieces by Davies, Henze, Mompu, Torroba, and others. **wcom.org.uk/news-events/awards**

APRIL 21–23
Toronto Guitar Weekend
Toronto, Canada
At Church of St. Simon-the-Apostle: Artists include the Eden Stell Duo, Alec Holcomb, and Bokyung Byun. Concerts, lectures, master class, open mic with the Guitar Society of Toronto Orchestra, luthier/vendor fair, and brunch with the artists. **guitarsocietyoftoronto.com**

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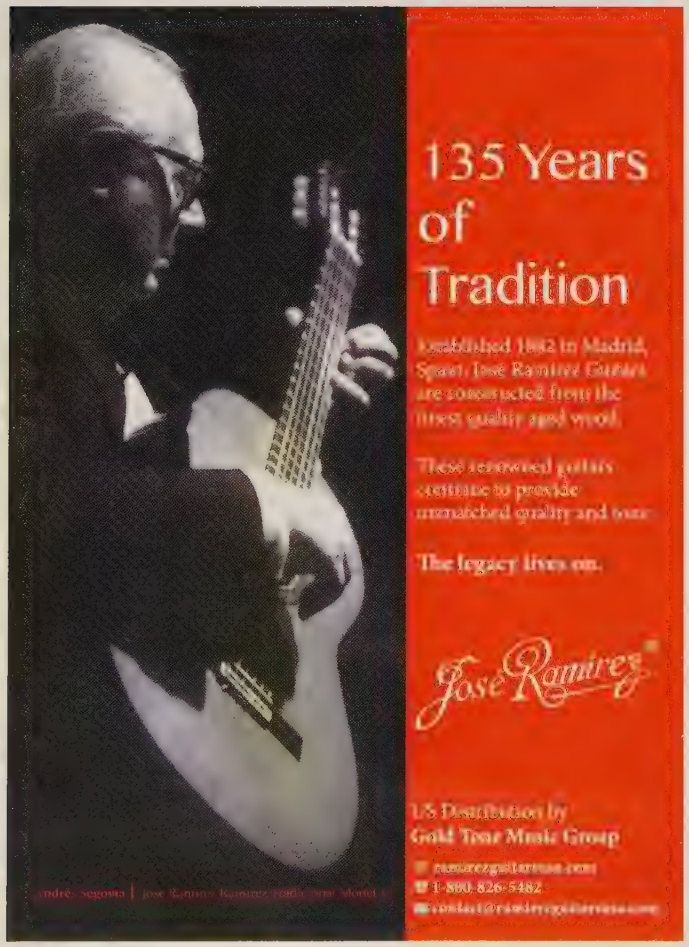
APRIL 27–30
Gitarrenfestival Nordhorn
Nordhorn, Germany
In northwest Germany, near the Netherlands border, with four solo guitar competitions, plus a composition competition, and an ensemble competition. Concerts featuring Anido Guitar Duo, Stefan Grasse, Carlo Marchione, Alberto Mesirca, Eugenio Silva and Tom Kirstens, and a tribute to Roland Dyens. Master classes, luthier fair, and more. **bobbyrootveld.wixsite.com/nordhorn/competition**

MAY 26–28
Guitare Montréal
Montreal, Canada
At Concordia University. Information should be available soon.
guitaremontreal.com

MAY 29–JUNE 5
Koblenz International Guitar Festival
Koblenz, Germany
Always one of Europe's premier guitar fests, this one will again feature concerts, master classes, an open competition, workshops, and lectures. Some of the many on the artist roster are Pepe Romero, Manuel Barrueco, Beijing Duo, Scott Tennant, Marcin Dylla, Pavel Steidl, Zoran Dukic, Göran Söllscher, and David Russell. Also, a tribute for Leo Brouwer, who is scheduled to attend.
koblenzguitarfestival.de/en/

JUNE 12–17
Classical Minds Guitar Festival and Competition
Bellaire, Texas
The 13th festival features high school- and college-level competitions, workshops, lectures, student recitals, technique instruction, private lessons, and performances. Artists include Rene Izquierdo, Irene Gomez, Frank Wallace, Eddie Healy, Jeremy Garcia, and artistic director Valerie Hartzell.
classicalmindsfestival.org

JUNE 19–24
Guitar Foundation of America International Convention and Competition
Fullerton, California
South of L.A. at California State University Fullerton, this year's confab includes the usual competitions, vendor's fair, master classes, and more. Artists include local hosts Martha Masters and Andrew York, plus William Kanengiser, Alvaro Pierri, SoloDuo, Jéremy Jouve, Gaelle Solal & Boris Gaquere, and more.
guitarfoundation.org



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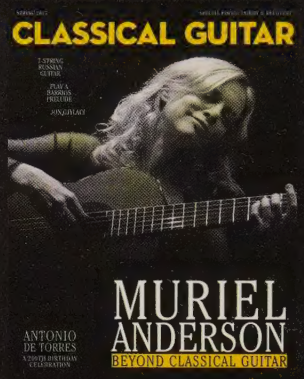

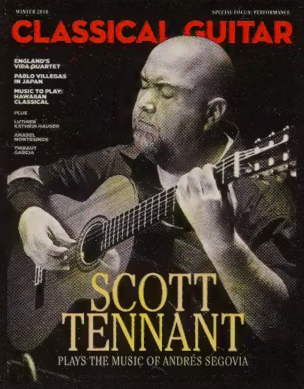

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"IN SOME WAYS the guitar world can be pretty insular. If we have the situation [at festivals] where we have a guitarist playing for other guitarists, music being written by guitarists, reviewed by guitarists, organized by guitarists, that obviously has its limitations. On the other hand, it does create a forum for guitarists who want to get together, enjoy the guitar, talk about the guitar, and try to improve the whole guitar situation. I can think of a number of instruments that would be very happy to have the structure that we have, of guitar festivals around the world."

—MANUEL BARRUECO

from an interview with Thérèse Wassily Saba and Colin Cooper in the April 2007 issue of *Classical Guitar*

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